

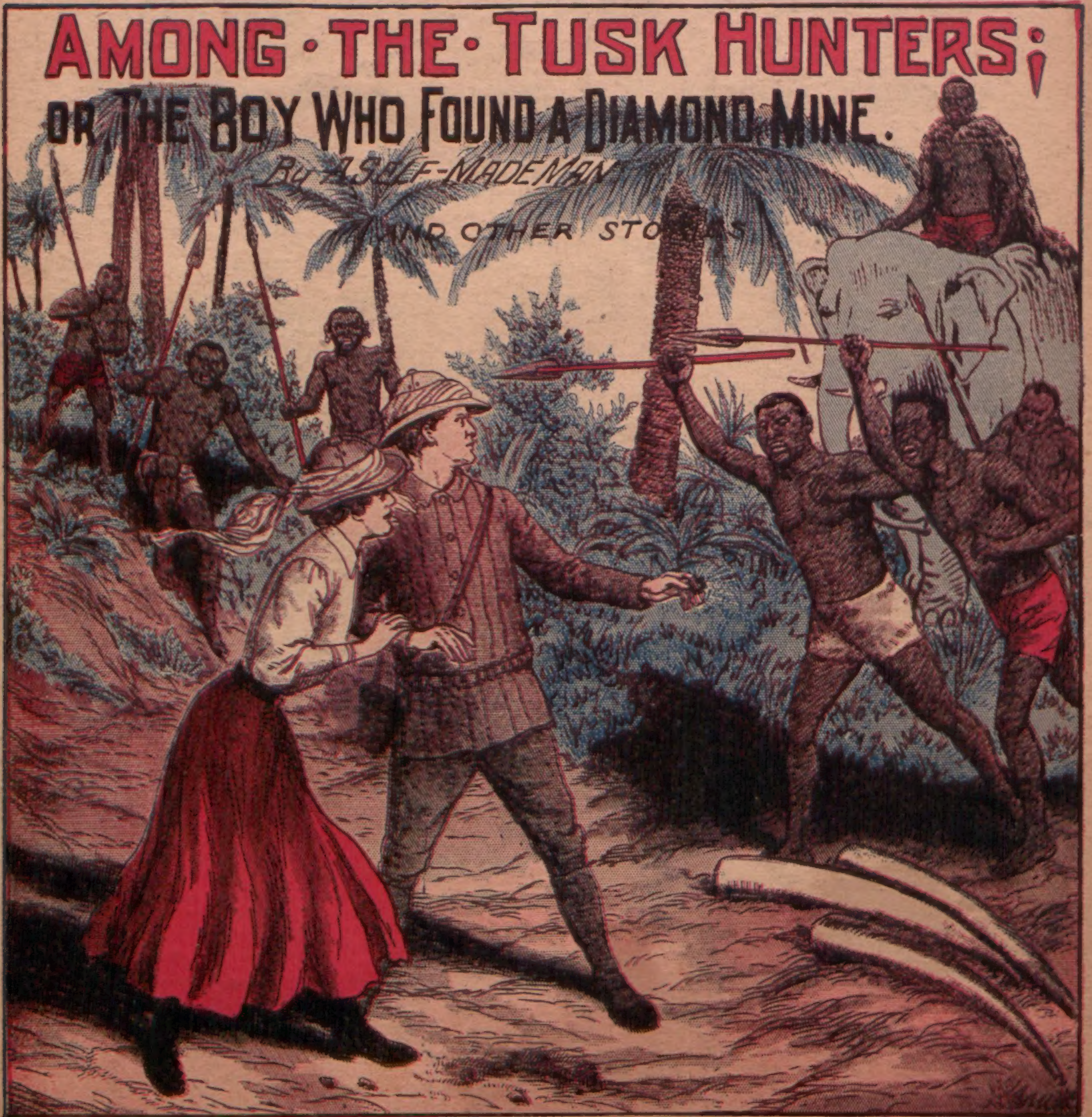
FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

AMONG THE TUSK HUNTERS; OR THE BOY WHO FOUND A DIAMOND MINE.

By A SELF-MADE MAN

AND OTHER STORIES



As Jack and Ada stood gazing at the hole containing the rough diamonds, a rustling among the bushes startled them. Looking up, they saw that they were surrounded by a crowd of Kaffirs, two of whom threatened them with their spears.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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Among the Tusk Hunters

—OR—

THE BOY WHO FOUND A DIAMOND MINE

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

NOAH WEBB.

"I wonder what that thing is yonder?" muttered Jack Cleveland, standing by the rail of the British brig Cinnabar, as he looked at a small object rising and falling on the surface of the broad Atlantic in the full glare of the setting sun.

Jack was a bright American boy who was making a long ocean voyage from New York to Cape Town, South Africa, for his health, under the wing of Professor Casey, who was something of a naturalist as well as an expert in mathematics.

Ambitious to outshine his fellow students at the Norwood Institute, Oakdale, L. I., Jack had studied so hard all winter and spring that when vacation time arrived he was so badly knocked out that the family physician advised an extended sea voyage in a sailing vessel.

Professor Casey, an old college associate of Jack's father, having announced his intention of going to Cape Town on the brig Cinnabar, instead of by fast mail steamer via Southampton, England, Mr. Cleveland decided to send his son under his charge, a responsibility that the professor willingly accepted in the light of old friendship.

The brig was now within about two weeks' sail of her destination, and Jack had improved so much in health since leaving New York many weeks since, that he declared he felt as good as he ever did in his life.

Professor Casey's ultimate destination was the diamond mines of Kimberly, and Jack was delighted at the idea of visiting the famous South African diamond fields, of which he had heard and read so much.

During the voyage he had gleaned a fund of information about diamonds and diamond digging from the professor.

Professor Casey had fully explained how diamonds were found in the rough; what they looked like in that state, and the methods followed at the different mines for bringing them to light, so that the boy felt sure that he would know a diamond in whatever state it was presented to his notice.

"What are you looking at so intent'y, Jack?" asked Professor Casey, stepping up beside the hero of this story.

"I'm looking at that black patch in the sunshine yonder," replied the boy. "Take a peep at it, professor," he added, tendering the glass to his companion.

Professor Casey leveled the glass at the spot indicated by Jack and made out the object which had attracted the lad's notice.

He couldn't tell what it was, though.

At that moment the lookout, seated astride of the foremast cross-trees, hailed the deck.

The chief mate, who was in charge of the deck, advanced to the break in the poop and asked him what he had to communicate.

The lookout replied that he had sighted something three points on the port bow that looked like a raft.

The mate thereupon stepped over to Jack, who had borrowed his binocular, and taking the glass sprang into the rigging and focused the floating object.

He judged that it was a raft, and the possibility that there might be shipwrecked people on it induced him to alter the brig's course so as to overhaul the object.

"Is it a raft, Mr. Finley?" Jack asked the mate when he returned to the poop.

"Yes, I think it is," was the reply.

"Any persons on it?" continued the boy in some excitement.

"Couldn't say as yet; but I saw no indications of it in the glass."

"A raft floating about at sea indicates a shipwreck, doesn't it?"

"It is suggestive of such a thing," admitted the mate. "But when a vessel is in danger of foundering, or some other catastrophe beyond the power of those aboard to avert, the officers and crew always take to their boats if they are not swept away or smashed. Rafts are unwieldy things, that take time to build and are not manageable to any great extent. As the captain does not usually abandon his vessel till the last moment, haste is generally an object."

The Cinnabar, under a strong breeze, rapidly overhauled the raft, and as the distance was reduced the mate jumped into the rigging again to get another view of it.

Whatever he saw this time caused him to call several sailors to man one of the brig's boats, which was presently in the water and pulling for the raft while the vessel was hove to to await its return.

The mate then went into the cabin to tell the captain, who followed him on deck.

Jack and the professor clearly saw the bowman of the boat lift an object from the raft and place it in the bottom of the boat, which was then headed back for the brig.

"There was somebody on the raft," said Jack excitedly.

"I see there was," replied Professor Casey.

"It is probable he's alive, whoever he is."

"I should judge he is."

"Maybe the only survivor of a lost vessel."

"Possibly," replied the professor. "We'll soon know all about it if the man is in condition to tell his story."

Inside of five minutes the boat was hoisted up to the davits and the castaway was taken out of her and laid on the deck amidships.

He was a small man, with unprepossessing features, which were not improved by a cast in one of his eyes.

A two weeks' growth of beard stuck out through his tanned features.

He was dressed only in a dirty shirt, a jacket, and a pair of disreputable trousers, secured at his waist by a sailor's belt.

A stiff glass of rum revived him, and he sat up without assistance and looked around him.

"Well," said the mate, who had descended to the deck, followed by Jack Cleveland, to meet him, while the watch on deck and several of those not on duty gathered in a circle around, curious to find out what had sent this unsavory-looking personage adrift all by himself, "what is your name, my man, and how came you to be at sea on that raft?"

The castaway squinted at his questioner a moment and then said in a weak voice:

"My name is Noah Webb. I was cook of the Dunbar Castle, bound from Cardiff to Calcutta. The ship foundered two weeks ago after a storm."

"What became of the officers and crew?" asked the mate.

"All the boats were stove but one, and most of 'em took to that."

"And the others built that raft, I suppose, and left the ship on it with you, eh?"

"Yes," replied Webb in a surly tone.

"What became of them? How is it that you were the only one we found on it?"

"They starved to death and jumped overboard," replied Webb with a shifty glint in his good eye.

"And why didn't you starve, too? You seem to be in pretty fair condition after being two weeks on the raft, as you say you were."

"I had some food in my pockets," growled the castaway.

"Oh, you did? Didn't the others bring any food away with them?"

"Not a thing."

"Why not?"

"The ship went down too quick."

"And you never offered to divide with your shipmates?" said the mate in disgust.

"Didn't have enough for myself," snarled the man.

"How did you get along without water?"

"It rained a couple of times and I caught some in my hat."

"You did, eh? I don't see that you have any hat."

"Lost it overboard yesterday."

"How many were there on the raft beside yourself when you left the vessel?"

"Five."

"And every one but you jumped overboard?"

"Yes," replied Webb, looking down at the deck.

"Why?"

"Dunno why, unless they went crazy for want of somethin' to eat."

"But you took care not to go crazy for the same cause."

The survivor of the Dunbar Castle made no reply, only gazed sulkily around at the ring of faces surrounding him, all of which showed disapprobation at his selfish and heartless conduct.

"See what he's got in his pockets," said the mate. "And look in his shirt, too. It is bulging out."

The castaway resented the search, but he was overhauled, nevertheless, and quite a quantity of food was found on his person.

The mate looked his surprise.

"You say you've been two weeks on that raft and yet you have all that food left. You must have had more than you could carry that way when you left the ship. How did you manage to hide it from the knowledge of your companions?"

"I had some of it in a box," he said.

"There warn't no box on the raft when we took him off," put in one of the sailors who had gone in the boat.

"The box was washed overboard the other day," explained Webb sulkily.

"Well, by your own admission, and the evidence before us, you had considerable food in your possession when you left the Dunbar Castle, yet you managed in some way to keep it from your companions and let them starve. Aren't you a pretty kind of a cuss? It's a wonder you have the nerve to confess."

There wasn't a sailor present but felt like taking the castaway by the scruff of the neck and tossing him overboard.

The fellow eyed the mate in a wicked way, but made no reply.

The mate then went aft to the poop where the captain was standing and reported the facts to the master of the brig.

Captain Breeze was as much disgusted with the ex-cook's conduct as the others who had listened to the rascal's statement.

He walked over to where the man sat squatting on the deck and questioned him sharply about the loss of the Dunbar

Castle, and the subsequent experience of himself and his five companions on the craft.

The fellow acted sullen and defiant, sometimes refusing to reply at all, and often contradicting himself.

Both the captain and his mate began to doubt the truthfulness of the castaway's yarn as to many essential particulars.

Finally Captain Breeze told his mate to see that the rascal worked his way to Cape Town, where the skipper proposed to hand him over to the authorities, and let them deal with him as they saw fit.

He then returned to his cabin to enter the particulars in his log book, while Jack Cleveland hastened to impart what he had seen and heard to Professor Casey, who had not left the poop deck.

CHAPTER II.

THE STORMY PETREL.

Two days passed and the weather continued as fine as it had been for the past fortnight.

The brig was gradually approaching the Cape of Good Hope, and Captain Breeze hoped to reach Cape Town within ten days, or two weeks at the outside.

Time was beginning to hang heavily on Jack Cleveland's hands, for he had seen little else but sea and sky for several weeks.

"Gee! I wish something would turn up for a change, but I suppose nothing will till this brig reaches Cape Town," he said to himself as he stood on the poop, leaning over the rail, looking forward. "I'll be mighty glad to get ashore again. No more long sea voyages for me. When I go home it will be by steamer by way of the Red Sea, Isthmus of Suez, Mediterranean, Southampton and the American Line. There's that rascal now. He's been put to work to help the cook, because that's about all he's good for aboard. The captain seems to think that the fellow didn't tell more than half of the real facts about his experience on the raft. I'm inclined to believe the skipper is right. The man looks like a tough rascal. That face of his is enough to give him away. Hello! What's the matter now?"

A blood-curdling yell came from the open door of the galley.

The sound of blows, and more yells followed.

Then Noah Webb was propelled through the doorway by the foot of the brig's cook.

The cook, who was a big man, rushed out and gave the unlucky castaway another hoist that landed him a yard further along the deck.

Webb rolled about on the deck like a person suffering great pain.

Several sailors gathered about his prostrate form as the cook went back to his quarters, and they laughed at and poked all manner of fun at Webb.

The castaway finally sat up and shook his fist at them, whereupon one of them got a rope's end and belabored the ex-cook till he roared again.

The second mate, who was in charge of the deck, did not interfere, for, like the captain and the chief mate, he had no sympathy for the fellow, who was looked upon with contempt by all on board.

The sailors, after mauling and booting Webb around for a while, drew off and left the rascal to himself.

Muttering threats and expressions of rage, he disappeared into the forecabin.

"He must have done something in the galley that the cook wouldn't stand for," thought Jack, sauntering over to have a chat with the helmsman.

After dinner Jack went forward and on passing the galley door he saw Webb sulkily washing the pots and pans.

The fellow glared vindictively at the boy, although Jack had in no way molested him.

While Jack was on the forecabin talking to one of the sailors, Webb, having finished his work, sat down on the cook's stool outside the door and proceeded to smoke a pipe.

He hadn't been there long before the cook came out of the forecabin hatch, and spying his assistant taking his ease in the sunshine, he walked up behind him and grabbing him by the collar of his jacket lifted him from the stool and then applied a tremendous kick in the seat of his trousers.

Webb uttered a yell as he went flying several feet away:

"Come here!" roared the cook as the castaway picked himself up. "Come here, or I'll beat you into a jelly!"

Webb did not dare hold back, though he approached his persecutor in great dread.

"Go down in the lazarette under the floor of the cabin and fetch me a box of tapioca. Get a move on, or, by Christopher, I'll freshen your way with another h'ist!"

The cook raised his foot threateningly, and the castaway flew aft to save himself.

He stumbled against the chief mate, who was coming out of the passage door, and Finley shoved him aside so roughly that he fell to the deck.

He got up and shook his fist at the mate's back, then entered the passage that led to the cabin.

When Webb came out of the passage a quarter of an hour later there was a fiendish grin on his ugly countenance.

In his hand he carried the box of tapioca, inside his shirt he carried another package, containing something he had found in the storehold.

He seemed to have forgotten all his pains and aches, and almost skipped across the deck to the galley.

One of the sailors he passed looked at him in surprise.

The change that had come over the castaway was something remarkable.

He entered the galley, and thereafter obeyed all the orders of the cook with such alacrity that the man had no reason to attack him again.

An hour before sunset a flock of Mother Carey's chickens came flying around the brig.

Two or three of them actually came aboard and roosted on the main yard.

Professor Casey was greatly interested in the birds and anxious to obtain a specimen which he could stuff, for he was something of a taxidermist, for his collection.

"Get your revolver, Jack, and see if you can bring down one of those that have alighted on the yard," he said.

Jack hurried to his stateroom, got his revolver, and started for the forecabin, where he could get within closer range of the birds.

The birds made no effort to fly away, and the boy reaching an advantageous position, raised his revolver and took aim at one of them.

Before he could pull the trigger the weapon was knocked from his hand by one of the sailors.

"I beg your pardon, young man," said the seaman in an apologetic tone, "but you mustn't shoot them birds."

"Why not?" demanded Jack, in some indignation.

"Because them birds are the stormy petrel, or Mother Carey's chickens."

"What if they are? They're no different from any other sea bird that I've fired at before and nobody has made a kick."

"Yes, they are. It would bring bad luck on the brig if you or any one else on board was to kill one of them," replied the sailor.

"Oh, that's all rot—some of your sailor superstition. I read about that in story books, but never took any stock in it. How could a dead bird bring bad luck to a vessel?"

"If you had shot one of them birds we'd never have reached port."

"That so? Well, that's pretty good," and Jack laughed.

The seaman, however, looked very solemn.

"If you was a sailor you'd know I speak the truth," he replied.

"Do all the sailors aboard believe the same as you do?" The sailor nodded.

"Do the captain and mates believe the same nonsense?"

"Go and ask the skipper to allow you to shoot one of them birds and see what he says," replied the mariner.

"Say, what would prevent this brig reaching Cape Town if I shot one of those petrels?"

"Somethin' would happen. A storm, maybe, or we'd spring a leak, or some other kind of misfortune would happen to us."

"All right. I don't want to make any hard feeling between the crew and myself just on account of a bird, though I don't believe a word you say about hard luck hitting this vessel if I did shoot the petrel."

"Thank you, young man. There will be other birds in a day or two that you can shoot at as much as you choose; but never, as long as you live, kill a stormy petrel."

As the sailor turned away both he and Jack were startled by the report of a revolver close by, and one of the petrels fluttered off the yard and fell quite dead at the boy's feet.

Looking down over the break of the forecabin they saw Noah Webb standing on the deck with Jack's smoking weapon in his hand, and a malevolent grin on his face.

He had been passing at the moment the revolver was knocked out of Jack's hand and it fell within his reach.

After listening to the dispute between Jack and the sailor he picked up the gun and fired at one of the birds.

Whether he was a good shot, or accident had directed the ball, certain it is he hit his mark, as we have seen.

Then he dropped the revolver and fled to the galley, at the door of which stood the cook, attracted by the pistol shot.

"What you been doin'?" demanded the cook.

"Shootin' one of them birds," replied Webb, trying to dart past his questioner.

The cook was too quick for him.

"Don't you know no better'n to shoot one of Mother Carey's chickens, you villain?" roared the cook, grabbing him by the nape of the neck. "I guess you'll see your finish as soon as the men get after you. I'll give you somethin' as a starter."

He then proceeded to beat Webb most unmercifully until the wretch roared and squirmed about with pain.

The cook finished by kicking him across the deck to the port bulwark.

The castaway was so bruised that he could not walk, but lay moaning in the scupper.

As the news of the shooting spread among the crew half a dozen of them rushed upon Webb to execute vengeance on him.

Jack, who had picked up the dead bird and recovered his revolver, fearful that the men might murder the poor wretch, rushed between them and their victim.

"Stand back!" he cried, covering them with his weapon. "This is a matter for the captain to attend to. He has been pounded enough for the present."

The sailors paused, somewhat deterred by the boy's resolute demeanor.

"The scoundrel ought to be hove overboard," said one of them. "He has brought ill luck on this vessel."

"Don't you worry about that," returned Jack with a short laugh. "Nothing is going to happen to this vessel."

"You'll think differently, young man, in a day or two," replied one of the sailors with a gloomy shake of the head.

At that moment both the captain and the chief mate came hurrying to the scene of trouble.

Jack, in the act of holding back half of the crew at the point of a revolver, was incomprehensible to them.

"What's wrong here, young man?" asked Captain Breeze. "Are you keeping my men from attacking that rascal behind you?"

He alluded to Webb, who was crouching down behind the boy in a state of abject fear.

"Yes; I'm afraid they want to toss him overboard, and that would be murder. Now that you are here, I'm out of it."

Jack put his revolver in his pocket and walked away to present the dead stormy petrel to Professor Carey.

CHAPTER III.

HOW JACK SAVED THE BRIG FROM BECOMING A FLOATING COFFIN.

"There's the bird you wanted, professor," said Jack, handing the petrel to his traveling companion. "It's called a Mother Carey's chicken."

"Thank you, Jack; but what is the trouble on deck about? Are the sailors after that poor rascal again?"

"Yes; all on account of this bird."

"Why, how is that?"

"He shot the bird."

"I thought it was you what shot it."

"No, one of the sailors prevented me. He knocked the revolver from my hand just as I was taking aim at a bird."

"Why did he do that?" asked Professor Carey in surprise.

"He said it would bring bad luck on the brig to shoot one of those birds. That castaway chap picked up the revolver and shot the bird while the sailor was talking to me. The cook then knocked thunder out of him and the sailors wanted to toss him overboard. As I didn't want to see him murdered over a lot of superstitious rot I jumped in and stood the men off till the captain and Mr. Finley came. You can see them arguing now with the men forward."

"I see them," replied the professor. "So this is a real stormy petrel, eh?" he added, regarding the bird with great interest. "I have heard that sailors look upon it with a superstitious respect."

"Why should they?" asked Jack.

"Sailors claim that the soul of every sailor lost at sea goes into a stormy petrel, and they consider it a sacrilege to kill one of the birds. You and I, however, know that is all nonsense. The petrel is simply a species of sea bird, that's all."

"Of course. That's what I told the sailor who interfered, but he shook his head, and said if I were a sailor I'd know differently," replied Jack.

While Jack and the professor were talking the captain and the mate succeeded in calming the rage of the sailors against Noah Webb for killing the petrel.

The rascal was permitted to limp into the fore-castle, where he coiled himself up in a corner and began to brood over the revenge he meant to take on everybody aboard the vessel.

Although he had no grievance against the two passengers, and ought to have felt grateful to Jack Cleveland for saving him from the vengeance of the sailors, he included them in his scheme without the least remorse, as he could not warn them without running the risk of spoiling his plan, which was nothing more or less than poisoning the plum duff that the cook had announced for dinner next day.

While looking in the lazarette for the box of tapioca he had come across a package of arsenic, and he intended to put enough of this in the pudding to insure the speedy death of everybody who ate it.

What would become of the brig, with nobody aboard to work her, or himself, for that matter, did not appear to worry him much at that moment.

The scheme was about as diabolical as a human being could conceive, and that it failed to go through was due to the merest accident—and Jack Cleveland.

At eleven o'clock next day the plum duff, on which the cook especially prided himself, was all made ready to put into a bag and be boiled.

Noah Webb had watched the making of the pudding with greedy eyes, wondering how he could manage to get the cook out of the gallery long enough to enable him to put half the arsenic in the package into the savory-looking mess.

After finishing the peeling of a panful of potatoes he slipped outside for a few minutes.

On his return he told the cook that the captain wanted to see him in the cabin.

Not suspecting that Noah Webb was lying, the cook, leaving the pudding on the shelf where he had been mixing it, started aft.

Webb watched him till he was half-way there, then he took the package of arsenic from his shirt, tore open the end of it and sprinkled the pudding copiously with the poison.

As he did this Jack Cleveland happened to pass the door of the galley and casually glanced in.

When he saw the rascal sprinkle the pudding with the contents of a package taken from his bosom he thought the action so queer that he paused to take another and keener look at what the fellow was doing.

Webb put the package down on the shelf while he stirred the stuff well into the plum duff.

That act saved the lives of the ship's company that day.

The label on the package faced the boy, and with a gasp he read the word "Arsenic" in big, black type.

Instantly the suspicion that some crooked work was going on flashed across his brain.

On the spur of the moment he sprang into the galley and seized Webb by the arm.

The scoundrel uttered a frightened cry, thinking it was the cook come back in a hurry.

When he saw that it was Jack he quickly recovered his nerve and favored the boy with a ghastly kind of grin, meant to be friendly.

"Isn't that the plum duff you are stirring?" asked Jack in a tremor of excitement.

Webb nodded.

"It's too rich to-day for a young chap like you to eat. I wouldn't touch it if I was you," he said.

"Look here, Webb, what are you up to, anyway?" asked Jack.

"Stirrin' the puddin'," chuckled the castaway.

"Is it customary to put arsenic in plum duff?" asked the boy, pointing at the package on the shelf.

With a snarl like that of a famished wolf Webb snatched up the package, but Jack caught him by the wrist.

"Can it be that you have poisoned that puddin'?" cried Jack, appalled at the very idea of such a thing.

"Let me go, will you?" exclaimed Webb, snatching up a carving-knife with his left hand. "Let me go, or——"

There was murder in the scoundrel's eye and Jack saw it; but he was not daunted.

He was sure now that the ex-cook was guilty of tampering with the pudding.

Reaching over, he seized the man's other wrist before he could lunge out with the knife.

As Webb was small and not over-strong after his recent experience on the raft, he was not a match for the athletic youth who had recovered all his former strength.

As Jack pushed Webb up against the wall near the range, the cook entered the galley with fire in his eye.

He was just aching to get his hands on the castaway in order to pay him up for sending him on a wild-goose chase to the cabin.

He stopped and stared in surprise on seeing the rascal struggling in the young passenger's grasp.

"What's the trouble, Mr. Cleveland?" he asked.

"Trouble enough, doctor. What do you suppose I caught this villain doing?"

"What was the shunk doin'?"

"Puttin' arsenic in your plum duff."

"What!" howled the cook, turning fairly livid with astonishment and consternation. "Puttin' arsenic in the puddin'! You can't mean that!"

"But I do mean it. Take that package out of his fingers and look at it."

The cook did so, and when he read the label great beads of perspiration stood on his horrified face.

It isn't necessary to put down the expression that passed his lips.

It wouldn't look well in print, anyway.

With a roar like an enraged beast he reached for Webb and fairly tore him from Jack's grasp.

The rascal tried to defend himself with the carving-knife, but the infuriated cook twisted it from his grip, nearly breaking his wrist.

Then he dragged the wretch from the galley, and calling on Jack to follow he marched straight for the captain's cabin.

He entered without ceremony, hauling Webb along.

Captain Breeze started to his feet, greatly annoyed by the interruption.

His annoyance changed to dismay when the cook explained matters in a few words and called on the boy for corroboration.

Jack then told his story straight to the point.

"You scoundrel!" cried the captain. "Did you intend to poison every one aboard the brig?"

Webb looked sulkily at the floor and had nothing to say.

"Tell Mr. Finley to step down here," said Captain Breeze to his young passenger.

Jack hurriedly conveyed the skipper's request to the chief mate on the poop.

When the mate learned the condition of affairs he nearly had a fit.

"We must put the scoundrel in irons," he said hoarsely. "Hanging would be too good a punishment for such a crime as he is guilty of; but, unfortunately, the law doesn't go that far in his case, though he might get life imprisonment."

Accordingly Noah Webb was put in iron shackles and confined in a small hole called the forepeak.

There was no plum duff that day, and it wasn't long before every soul in the brig knew the reason why.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE GRASP OF THE TEMPEST.

The sailors of the brig "Cinnabar," who had maintained a gloomy behavior since the shooting of the stormy petrel by Noah Webb, were greatly startled when they learned of the narrow escape all on board had had from wholesale poisoning.

They were assured that this was one of the misfortunes that came in the train of the death of the bird, and the fact that the scheme had miscarried through the providential appearance of Jack Cleveland at the galley door at the critical moment did not serve to raise their spirits.

They argued that it was merely a warning of more trouble to come.

The seaman who had knocked the revolver from Jack's hand told him with great solemnity that the "Cinnabar" would never reach Cape Town.

"You really believe that, do you?" replied the boy, strangely impressed by the sailor's manner in spite of his better judgment.

"Aye, aye," answered the man with a hopeless ring in his voice.

"You'll find yourself disappointed," returned Jack. "We'll reach Cape Town all right, and then I'll give you chaps the laugh."

The seaman shook his head.

"We might possibly escape what's comin' by tossin' that scoundrel overboard. He's a Jonah, and will carry us all to destruction with him," he said.

"Oh, he'll get all that's coming to him when he's turned over to the authorities at Cape Town. My evidence will settle him," said Jack.

"He'll never be brought to trial. He's doomed already, and with him every one aboard of the brig."

Nothing Jack could say availed to shake the dogged sentiments of the mariner, and the boy left him to his gloomy reflections.

Jack brought the matter up at the dinner table that day.

"I've heard and read a whole lot about superstition among sailors, but I never thought they were as bad as your men appear to be," he said to the captain.

"The killing of a Mother Carey's chicken is a very serious matter among sailors," replied Captain Breeze without the flicker of a smile. "The idea that misfortune will surely follow is firmly imbedded in their minds, and no argument you might bring forward would convince them to the contrary."

"But you don't imagine for a moment, do you, that this vessel won't reach Cape Town about the time you have calculated she is due there?" asked Jack.

"I see no reason why she shouldn't," answered the skipper.

"Well, after we have reached port all right oughtn't that knock the nonsensical ideas about stormy petrels out of the men's heads?"

"I'm afraid not. They would still believe that misfortune was only temporarily averted. It is about impossible to get a life-long idea out a sailor's head."

"I had an idea that superstition was taking a back seat these days. Everybody is getting educated to take a common sense view of things."

The captain nodded, but did not seem to wish to continue the subject.

After the meal Jack, as usual, went on deck and noted with satisfaction what a fine day it was, and how the brig was making for cape as fast as a stiff breeze could carry her on her course.

"Those sailors make me tired," he muttered as he looked around the seascape. "There isn't the slightest sign of any hard luck for us in sight. I'd be willing to bet a dollar to a doughnut that nothing will happen."

Toward sundown the breeze began to drop, and when tea was announced as ready in the cabin there was scarcely any wind at all.

Jack returned to the deck to see the round orb of day disappearing below the western horizon, leaving the brig perfectly motionless on the bosom of the Atlantic.

"How long do you suppose this calm will last?" the boy asked the steersman.

"Dunno," replied the sailor, shifting his quid in his mouth; "but I reckon it won't last many hours."

"I'm glad to hear that," said Jack, who was most anxious to reach Cape Town.

"P'haps we'll have more wind than we want before mornin'," said the man.

"How do you make that out?"

"Heard the mate say the barometer was droppin' fast."

"That means a storm, but I don't see any signs of one," replied the boy, looking all around the darkening horizon.

For an hour calm and silence pervaded the deck of the brig, as it also did over the vast seascape surrounding the vessel, and then it was broken.

Captain Breeze had given orders to his chief officer, and the mate was now shouting lustily to the crew, though there was not a breath of air stirring.

Then Jack noticed that the star-lit sky in the southwest was disappearing as though a heavy, black pall was being drawn across it.

In the east, just as dense and black, was another mass of clouds banking themselves up toward the zenith.

Nearly every sail was taken in and clewed up aboard the brig.

Jack also noted the fact that the skipper remained on deck himself, and his nervous pacing of the poop showed that he was not wholly at ease.

Captain Breeze and his chief mate held occasional consultations.

The cause of their anxiety was the approach of two storms from almost different directions at the same time, and it was impossible to determine, as yet, which was likely to hit the vessel first.

The dense black clouds slowly approached mid-heaven, and it was long after dark before there appeared to be any commotion of the elements.

As the gloom increased streaks of lightning appeared, growing more and more vivid, the zig-zag chains of electric fluid darting angrily from the inky masses of cloud which obscured the heavens.

The heavy thunder sounded nearer and more overhead, indicating the nearer approach of the two storms.

Scarcely did the flashing lightning—almost instantly followed by the cannon-like crash of the thunder—blaze and peal on one side of the brig before the flaming bolt and startling roar were taken up on the other side, as though the two tempests were vying with each other for the mastery of the air.

At length from far away to southwest, between the peals of thunder, came a confused, roaring sound.

At the same time a slight puff of air swelled the upper canvas of the brig that had not been taken in, and the helmsman threw the wheel over to meet her, as the vessel began to move through the still waters.

"Haul down the fore-topmast stays'ls!" shouted Captain Breeze at the top of his lungs.

"Aye, aye, sir," returned the mate.

"It's coming down on us like a tornado," said the skipper to Professor Casey. "You and Master Jack had better get under cover at once."

The professor, willing to be guided by the captain's suggestion, called to Jack and started down the companion-ladder.

The mysterious darkness now surrounding the vessel, and the ghastly white line of foam advancing toward the brig from the southwest, awed Jack a good bit, and he concluded to retire to the cabin along with the professor.

"Furl the fore-tops'l!" cried the captain as Jack started below.

The last order the boy heard was to set the main-stays'l, but before this order could be executed the tempest was upon the brig with a rush and a roar that meant business.

In fifteen minutes the storm from the eastward caught the vessel, and she became the center of the elemental strife.

"This is something fierce, professor," said Jack as the two clung each to his stationary chair in the cabin. "Who'd have thought at sunset that we'd be up against anything like this in a few hours?"

Professor Casey nodded, for the uproar was so terrific that conversation could be only carried on with the utmost difficulty.

The lightning was now more frequent and vivid, and the thunder followed each flash almost instantaneously.

"I suppose the sailors think that the Mother Carey's chicken that you stuffed this afternoon is the cause of this," said Jack. "We've been through as bad a storm as this before since leaving New York, and we came out of it all right. I'm willing to bet we weather this one, too."

As the boy spoke a tremendous concussion stretched him and the professor senseless on the cabin floor.

A heavy bolt of lightning, accompanied at the same instant by a terrific peal of thunder, struck the main-royal mast-head, and leaped down the mast in a lurid current of fire.

At the throat of the main-boom it was divided, part of it following the mast down into the cabin and hold, knocking out Jack and Professor Casey, and the rest darting off on the spar, where the second mate and four sailors were at work setting the spanker.

Every one of them was struck down lifeless to the deck.

Even the man at the wheel, together with Captain Breeze, who was helping him hold the vessel on her course, shared the fate of those on the boom.

The lightning had capriciously leaped from the boom to

the metal work of the wheel, shattering the whole into a thousand pieces and splintering the rudder-head as though it had been so much glass.

The rudder disabled, the few sails that had been set to hold the brig were rent into ribbons, and the brig fell off into the trough of the sea, where she rolled helplessly at the mercy of the tempest.

CHAPTER V.

WRECKED ON THE COAST OF AFRICA.

The storm which swept over that part of the Atlantic Ocean, lashing the waters into a wild fury, lasted through the greater part of the night.

The helpless brig was borne onward in a northeasterly direction toward the coast of Africa, and the wonder of it was that she did not founder in the terrible seas that buffeted her to and fro.

The chief mate and the few sailors left after the thunderbolt had struck the craft clung for their lives to the lifelines stretched across the deck; but in the darkness and the tempest these survivors were swept away one by one as their hold weakened under the terrible strain, until when morning broke at last the deck of the ill-fated "Cinnabar" was completely bare of life.

In the cabin Jack and the professor had been flung about in their senseless condition, until there appeared to be but little life remaining to them.

The one person who had come off best of all was the one least deserving of such a special favor, namely, Noah Webb.

Having small hands and feet, he had managed to release himself from his irons, but though he had been bounced about the narrow confines of the forepeak by the wild plunges of the vessel he was not hurt in the least.

Still, if the vessel had gone down he would have been drowned like a rat in a trap, for the hinged trap leading down into his prison-pen was secured on the outside.

The thunder and lightning had long since passed away, but the wind yet blew a small hurricane, bearing the brig closer and closer toward the inhospitable coast.

When the sun rose it struggled in vain to pierce the overcast heavens, across which the heavy slate-colored clouds fled in confused masses, like the wild retreat of battle-routed legions.

It might have been eleven o'clock in the morning that Jack Cleveland came to his senses.

By the dull light that now came through the skylight above the table, and down through the companionway, he judged that the night had passed away and that it was early morning.

He was confused in his head, and sore all over from the rolling and jolting he had experienced for hours.

The idea that some desperate peril hung over the vessel and all on board seemed to impress itself upon him, and yet he could not realize just what it was.

He tried to fill the gap between nine o'clock the night before and the present moment, but could not.

Finally his eyes rested on the apparently lifeless form of Professor Casey.

His head lay against the mainmast, and the rest of his body partly under the table.

Then Jack noticed a gaping wound in the mast, where the lightning had split it open from the ceiling to the floor.

The cabin table was also rent in two parts, as if severed by a sharp instrument.

Jack gazed in astonishment at the damage done by the electric fluid.

He could not understand how or when it had happened.

The first thing he did was to rescue the professor from his awkward position.

He staggered with him across the wobbly floor to his stateroom and laid him on his bunk, where he tried without result, to revive him.

While he was engaged in this the vessel rose on a heavy sea and came down with a heavy crash.

Other crashes followed as the two masts went by the board, and then Jack became aware that all motion had ceased suddenly.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed. "What has happened? Have we run ashore somewhere?"

He rushed out of the professor's stateroom and up the brass-bound stairs of the companion way to the poop-deck.

He was fairly dazed by what he saw.

The brig, reduced to a mere hulk, had run high between two towering rocks about which the surges beat in mad fury, throwing clouds of white spume into the air.

The bows had split wide open through the center of the forecabin, leaving a gap in the deck a yard wide.

The deck fore and aft was littered with the rigging which had been carried to port by the fall of the masts in that direction.

The wreck of the masts and top-hamper lay sprawled out on the rocks, half submerged by the sea.

The stern of the brig, where Jack stood holding on to the rail, overhung a raging maelstrom of water, that rushed in and then receded every few moments.

Not a living being was to be seen anywhere on deck—captain, mates, and sailors had every one perished in the storm and wreck.

As Jack gazed dumfounded on the scene the prophecy of the sailor who had said the "Cinnabar" would never reach Cape Town came like a flash on his mind.

Truly his words had been realized in a most terrible way.

"Good Lord!" gasped the boy. ("Am I and Professor Casey the only ones left alive on board this brig?")

That brought his thoughts back to his traveling companion lying senseless below, and he rushed back to the stateroom to try once more to revive him.

But when he reached the professor the man's white face, staring eyes and fallen jaw told the boy the awful truth that Professor Casey was dead.

Jack was knocked all of a heap by this dreadful discovery.

He could do nothing but stare at the dead man for some moments as though he were the victim of some horrible nightmare.

He could not realize that he alone of everybody who had sailed away from New York many weeks before was now alive on the wreck of the "Cinnabar."

A feeling of real grief for the sad fate of the professor, as well as of despair as regarded himself and the uncertain future ahead, completely overcame the boy, and he sat down on the one chair in the room and gave way to tears.

And while he sat there, the very picture of despair, the sun burst through a rift in the clouds, and a stray beam danced upon the dull glass of the closed deadlight, lighting up the gloom of the stateroom.

When Jack looked up and saw the reflected sunlight he felt his courage revive.

"I can't afford to give way to despair like a little kid," he said. "I ought to be thankful for father and mother's sake that I am alive and unhurt, even if every other person on board is dead and gone. The storm is going down, and I appear to be in no danger at the present time. When the weather clears up I'll be able to make out where the vessel has struck—either on an island or the African coast. No doubt if the brig holds together I'll be rescued in time, either by some passing ship or by people from the shore."

Jack was naturally of an optimistic disposition, and did not long remain cast down by unpropitious circumstances.

Mournfully he closed the professor's eyes and placed a couple of pennies on each to hold the lids down.

Then he tied up the dead man's jaw with a towel, and composed his limbs in a peaceful position on the bed.

"That's all I can do for him for the present," he said, walking out of the room and closing the door.

Once more he made his way to the poop and looked about him anxiously.

As far as he could see up and down ran the coast-line, with stretches of glistening beach and bald-looking rocks in the foreground, and an endless extent of trees beyond.

"Clearly that isn't an island, so it must be the African coast," he muttered. "There is not a sign of human life anywhere as far as I can make out, which makes the outlook rather bad for me. I wonder how far north of Cape Town this place is? Maybe three, four or five hundred miles; maybe even further. If I were a navigator I could no doubt locate myself exactly with the help of the brig's instruments; but as I don't know anything more about navigation than a blind ostrich, why, I'm simply lost as far as my present whereabouts are. However, I know that Cape Town lies to the south, and if I travel in that direction I'm sure to find my way there with the help of some friendly inhabitant. I'm bound to meet plenty of white people in the Cape of Good Hope district, and probably this

is part of its coast-line, for it runs at least 400 miles to the north of Cape Town."

It was not on the shore of the Cape of Good Hope land that the brig had been wrecked, but several hundred miles further north on the coast of Great Namaqua Land, where there were few white but many natives of the Kaffir order.

Jack, however, didn't know that fact, and imagined he was much nearer civilization than he actually was.

After spending half an hour on deck the boy began to feel decidedly hungry, for it was long past the hour when he was accustomed to have his breakfast.

In fact, it was close on to the dinner hour.

"I must go into the steward's quarters and see what I can pick up to eat," he said, turning around and descending the stairs.

As he made his way to the pantry it occurred to him that the steward might be in the land of the living, as his duties did not call him on deck to take a hand in working the brig.

Still, if he was alive it was strange he had not already shown himself, for he was always up at five in the morning.

The steward's little stateroom opened off the passage, and Jack opened the door and looked in.

The man was not there.

Neither was he in the pantry, his regular stamping ground.

Jack then looked into the carpenter's room, but that personage was not there.

"Everybody seems to have vanished one way or another," he said mournfully. "I am apparently the last of the Mohicans."

There was plenty of food in the pantry and Jack set about satisfying his appetite.

Suddenly he heard a sound as if some one was in the passage.

Turning around he looked at the doorway and saw, framed in the opening, the last person he would have cared to meet of the brig's company—the villainous Noah Webb, looking at him with a malevolent grin.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH WEBB.

"He, he, he!" chuckled the ex-cook. "So you're alive, eh?"

"Yes, and you seem to be alive, too, Noah Webb," replied Jack with a feeling of disgust that this rascal should have escaped when so many good and decent people had perished.

"Why not?" grinned Webb. "I've a right to be alive, haven't I?"

"No, I don't think you have," answered Jack frankly. "A man who tried to poison everybody aboard the brig ought to be down in the infernal regions shoveling coal."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Webb again.

"However, you're bound to get there in time. Your master, Old Nick, is no doubt allowing you a longer lease of life so that you'll ripen for the furnace."

"So you ain't glad to have somebody to talk to. You're a funny boy, he, he, he!"

"I'm not stuck on talking with you, Noah Webb. I don't fancy your rascally ways."

"S'pose I go away and leave you, how are you goin' to reach Cape Town?"

"I don't see that you can help me any."

"He, he, he! Smart boy! Think you can help yourself, eh? Know where you are?"

"Perhaps you can tell me," replied Jack sarcastically.

"I could, but I won't, he, he, he!" grinned the rascal, walking into the pantry and beginning to help himself to food.

"Well, I know we're on the coast of Africa," said Jack.

"What part of Africa?" asked Webb, eyeing him askance.

"Cape of Good Hope," answered Jack at a venture.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Webb, eating away ravenously.

"Ain't I right?" asked the boy.

Webb's only reply was another chuckle, apparently of satisfaction.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Jack angrily.

Webb eyed the boy in a wicked way, but made no reply.

"Look here, Webb, do you know anything about this part of Africa?" asked Jack.

"He, he! Yes. Been up and down the coast several times."

"Do you recognize the locality?"

Webb cocked his eye at Jack and grinned in an expectant way.

"As I never did you any harm, but saved your soul from the crime of a wholesale murder, you might give me a tip about this coast if you know anything about it."

"I'll think about it," replied Webb, tackling a pot of pressed tongue with great relish. "So you think you're on the coast of the Cape of Good Hope, eh?"

"We ought to be somewhere in that locality," replied Jack.

"Well, we ain't."

"Do you know where we are?"

"I've an idea."

"What's your idea?"

"That we're a long way from Cape Town."

"A long way!" exclaimed Jack with a glum look.

The rascal nodded in a cheerful way, as though that fact didn't worry him any.

"How far?" continued the boy.

"About 800 miles."

Jack was rather staggered by the intelligence.

He didn't suppose that they were more than half as far from South Africa's chief town.

He looked at Webb and wondered if he was really telling the truth.

The rascal seemed to enjoy his discomfiture.

After he had eaten all he wanted he looked around and found part of a bottle of brandy.

Its discovery afforded him great satisfaction and he proceeded to take frequent drinks out of the bottle.

It was real French imported cognac, and the rascal soon began to show signs of intoxication.

The ugly side of his nature also came to the surface.

He dropped words now and then that showed his intentions toward the boy were not of a friendly character.

He intimated that Jack would never reach Cape Town.

From his disjointed sentences the lad gathered that the country around about that spot was occupied by blacks hostile to the white man, though they carried on a trade in ivory with a white settlement located on a bay some fifty miles south.

As the rascal went off into a drunken sleep Jack decided to leave the wreck as soon as possible and make for the settlement, either by boat, if he could find one uninjured aboard, or on foot along the shore.

So far as Noah Webb was concerned, Jack intended to let him shift for himself.

The first thing he did was to drag the intoxicated wretch into the carpenter's room off the passage, lay him on the bed and turn the key on him.

"That will keep the rascal from interfering with my arrangements in case he should sober up before I'm ready to leave the brig," said Jack.

He then went on deck, and threaded his way through the wreckage to the galley, on top of which the smallest of the brig's boats was battened down, keel upward.

Examining the boat, he saw it had sustained no injury.

The problem that presented itself to him was to free the boat from its stout fastenings, lower it to the deck, and afterwards get it afloat.

The sea had gone down a good bit since early morning, but the water was fairly rough yet, rushing up on the starboard side of the wreck nearly to the bows and then retreating to a point about midships.

Jack, after calculating upon the work before him, decided that he had no easy job to accomplish.

However, as his safety depended on his own exertions, he determined to put his shoulder to the wheel without delay.

He got a sharp knife out of the galley and after considerable exertion succeeded in freeing the boat from its bonds.

Then he shoved the little craft carefully over the edge of the roof and let it drop on a pile of cordage, which broke its fall.

It took all his strength and an hour's time to shove the boat to a clear part of the deck against the bulwark where the falls, from which the brig's long-boat had been torn during the storm, swung idly in the air.

Attaching the falls to the ring-bolts in the boat, Jack hoisted the boat, each end alternately, above the level of the bulwark.

By turning the iron davits outward the boat swung clear of the wreck.

"So far so good," muttered the boy, wiping the perspiration from his face. "That is the hardest job I ever tackled in my life. Now I must load the boat with some provisions from the pantry, a small keg of water, and such other articles as I may figure on that I need for my trip down the coast to the settlement Webb spoke about."

When he got back to the passage he heard Webb moving around in the carpenter's room and swearing like a trooper.

The rascal, who was only partially sober, was clearly in a furious humor at finding himself locked in, and Jack could hear him uttering threats about what he would do to the boy when he got out.

He pounded furiously on the door, and kicked at it time and again without making any impression on it, but Jack, fearing he might manage to break the door down and get out, and looking for trouble in that event, rushed to his stateroom and secured his revolver.

On his way back he heard a great crash, and reached the passage in time to see that Webb had smashed one of the panels with a hatchet he had found in the carpenter's chest.

When the rascal saw the boy he hurled a string of imprecations at him, his little bloodshot eyes bulging with rage.

"Just wait till I get out," he roared. "I'll kill you, you young monkey!"

He struck the lock a tremendous blow, smashing it and splintering the woodwork about it.

A kick from his foot swung the door open and he rushed at Jack with uplifted hatchet.

"Hold on or I'll shoot!" cried the boy, raising his revolver and covering Webb with it.

Inflamed by the brandy, and apparently reckless of the consequences, the fellow paid no attention to the command. In self-defense Jack was obliged to pull the trigger.

There was a flash, a report and Webb went down in a heap in the passage, where he lay perfectly motionless, bleeding from a wound on his head.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE TUSK HUNTERS.

"I hope I haven't killed him," ejaculated Jack, looking down at his fallen enemy. "I don't want to have any one's blood on my hands. I had to shoot or he'd have laid me out, and self-preservation is the first law of nature."

Examining the rascal's wound, he found, to his relief, that the bullet had merely torn the man's scalp and stunned him.

He dragged Webb into the steward's room, locked him in there, and rushed his preparations for departure.

Inside of half an hour he had the boat fairly loaded with canned goods and other food, a keg of water, and a bottle of brandy which might come in handy in an emergency.

He also took possession of a pair of navy revolvers and a bag of cartridges he found in the captain's room, and stowed them in a covered locker in the bows of the boat, together with a small quantity of English sovereigns and various other things.

Then he lowered the boat carefully into the water, which was much calmer now.

As he was all ready to go he slipped into the passage, unlocked the door of the steward's room, where Webb still lay unconscious, left it half open and returned to the deck.

Lowering himself down one of the falls, he unshipped the hooks fore and aft, pushed the boat to the stern of the wreck and thence into clear water.

Then putting out the oars he rowed off toward the beach.

When he got within thirty yards of the shore he turned the boat's head parallel with the coast and headed southward.

In fifteen minutes a projection of land shut out the view of the wreck, and he now began to realize that he was utterly alone on an uninhabited stretch of the coast of the dark continent.

He had covered several miles of his course, and it was growing dark, when he saw a creek, walled in by rushes, that struck him as a good safe place to put in and pass the night.

Accordingly he made for it, and in a short time he reached the head of the inlet, and stepping ashore tied the boat's painter to a tree.

Then he ate his evening meal, and turned in among the thick grass near the creek for a good sleep, as he anticipated a long and wearisome pull at the oars next day.

Jack slept peacefully through the night, but was awakened by a strange noise soon after sunrise.

It was the beating of a species of drum close at hand, and was accompanied by odd cries and chantings.

"What the dickens is that?" he asked himself, as he sat up and listened intently. "Must be a bunch of natives raising Cain in this vicinity. I guess I'd better make myself scarce before they catch sight of me, for, according to Webb, the blacks along this part of the coast are not on friendly terms with the whites, and something might happen I wouldn't like."

As he rose out of his grass bed he came face to face with two stalwart blacks, coming directly toward him.

Their shiny ebony skins glistened in the rays of the early morning sun, as if coated with varnish, and they would have been wholly naked but for a breech-cloth.

It would be hard to say which was the most surprised at the unexpected encounter—Jack or the natives.

The latter came to a sudden stop a yard from the boy and gazed at him in great wonder, while Jack returned their stare with interest.

The tableau lasted a few seconds and then the blacks uttered a series of sharp cries that speedily brought half a dozen other natives to the spot, one of whom seemed to hold a certain rank above the others, for he wore a long necklace of shark's teeth about his neck and across his broad chest, while a heavy gold bracelet encircled each arm between the shoulder and elbow.

Jack thought it was high time to make a move for his boat, which lay hidden in the rushes of the creek only a few yards away.

Accordingly he started in an unconcerned way for the spot.

But he did not get far.

At a signal from the chap with the necklace and bracelets three natives sprang forward and seized him.

At another signal he was forced to accompany the party to the seashore whence came the sound of the drum and chanting.

Jack offered no resistance to this high-handed proceeding on the part of the blacks, because he saw that he was quite helpless in their grasp.

A strange scene presently burst on the boy's sight.

About twenty natives, each armed with a broad-headed spear, were drawn up in a wide semi-circle on the beach.

They stood as solemn and motionless as so many black statues.

In the center of the half-circle stood a singularly attired ebony man, of sixty years at least, supported by two blacks wearing necklaces of gold and beads, and other insignia of rank.

He wore a kind of scarlet and yellow cloth toga that terminated at his knees.

A fillet of silk bound his temples, while his neck, arms and ankles were adorned with massive gold necklaces and bracelets, from the former of which hung pendant lumps of rock gold.

His sandals were made of red leather, and secured by bands ornamented with vari-colored beads.

Altogether his attire was quite imposing, but physically speaking he looked to be on his last legs from some kind of illness.

Jack judged him to be a person of consequence among the natives, and he was correct in his surmise.

This man was the king of the Gobabis tribe of ivory or tusk hunters, whose head village, or kraal, was situated a hundred or more miles in the interior of Great Namaqua Land, which adjoins Cape of Good Hope on the north.

He had been taken seriously ill with some kind of complaint which had baffled the skill of his medicine man, and as a last resort the royal physician had ordered the king to be carried to the seacoast where certain rites were now in progress looking to his recovery.

Three men with native drums, which they were beating with thick-headed wooden sticks, stood facing the king with their backs to the sea.

Just in front of them was the medicine man, a person of enormous stature, who was dressed in a fantastic costume of leopard skins, and whose face and arms were painted in white streaks, that made him look exceedingly weird.

He wore sandals, too, but plain ones, and divers golden ornaments.

Circling around the king and the two men who supported him were half a dozen natives, entirely nude, whose black skins were painted with white streaks and circles.

A double circle surrounded their eyes and mouths, while a single circle ornamented each cheek.

AMONG THE TUSK HUNTERS.

Narrow bandages of red cloth surrounded their thighs, their wrists, and their arms above the elbows.

They held above their heads miniature kettle-drums, covered with leopard skin, which gave forth a booming sound as they scraped their wet thumbs across the head.

These were the chanters, and their monotonous song filled the air while they kept time and danced to the notes of the three drummers.

At the moment Jack was brought on the scene the curious ceremony terminated on a signal from the medicine man.

Then he approached the king with great respect and said something to him in his native language.

The king replied in a feeble tone, whereupon the medicine man made an announcement to those assembled that the king was much better.

A single shout, in which all joined, even Jack's captors, greeted his words.

It was probably the invigorating sea air after the storm which, filling the royal lungs, made the king feel somewhat improved, and not the senseless mummary to which he had been needlessly subjected.

The king was at once borne to the royal litter and placed upon it in an easy attitude against a soft cushion of leopard skins.

Then the man with the shark necklace who had assisted in Jack's capture came forward, and kneeling before his royal highness announced the presence of a white prisoner.

The king, still drinking in the saline ozone which was doing him a lot of good, ordered Jack to be brought before him.

And Jack was brought forthwith.

He was ordered by dumb motions to kneel before the king, but Jack had too much of the American spirit in him to kowtow to any man, particularly a black one.

On the spur of the moment Jack saved himself from rough handling by sticking his thumbs in his ears and solemnly wagging his fingers to and fro, at the same time bowing his head a little.

This substitute for the other ceremony was accepted by the king as the proper thing in his case.

The royal personage asked Jack some question in his own tongue.

The boy shook his head to intimate that he did not understand.

The king then called on his medicine man to address the prisoner, which he did in a kind of broken Dutch, or as near as he could get to the Boer lingo, but as Jack understood it no better than the king's speech it didn't produce results.

"Can you speak English?" asked Jack.

"Ah, you Engleesh, eh?" said the royal physician, his face lighting up.

Jack nodded.

"Where from you come?"

Jack pointed at the ocean.

The medicine man looked puzzled, as if he did not quite understand how the boy could have come from the water.

"You come from sea, eh?"

Jack nodded again.

"How dat?"

"Ship," replied the boy.

The man understood at once.

"Where him now?"

Jack pointed north.

"How far?"

"Six miles," hazarded Jack as to the location of the wreck.

"Six mile," repeated the medicine man, who seemed to be figuring out that distance in his head.

Turning to the king he bowed very low and repeated the substance of what he had learned from Jack.

The king, who appeared to have greatly improved since the ceremony had been finished, listened attentively.

Then calling up one of the blacks who had supported him during the incantation, and who was a high court functionary, he gave him certain directions concerning the prisoner.

Five minutes later the boy, in charge of four ordinary natives, under command of the chap with the shark's teeth necklace, started for the interior.

Jack didn't want to leave the seashore where his boat was, but his feelings on the subject were not considered.

The king had ordered him to be taken to the chief kraal, and what the king said always went with his loyal subjects.

Consequently Jack, much against his will, was obliged to step out, and step lively, too, for the natives were tireless walkers.

CHAPTER VIII.

CARRIED INTO THE INTERIOR.

Jack was not tied in any way, but there wasn't any chance of his giving his attendants the slip, for one of them walked close on either side, one ahead and one behind, while the boss of the party, who was responsible for the delivery of the prisoner at the village, kept his sharp eyes on his charge more or less all the time.

Two minutes after the party left the seashore they found themselves beneath a roof of verdure that was impenetrable to the sun, and pursuing a devious route that might be called a pathway, only it was not marked out as one.

Beautifully green was the leafy canopy above their heads, the trees often rising to a height of a hundred feet without a bough or branch; but to make up for this an intricate tracery of cordage sprang from tree to tree, like the chains of a suspension bridge, composed of waxen-leaved creepers, bearing flowers of every conceivable size, shape and hue.

It put Jack much in mind of one of the gorgeous scenes in a fairy spectacle he had seen at one of the New York theaters the preceding Christmas.

"If a dozen or two ballet girls were suspended here and there, and colored lights turned on, it would be just like the theater," he thought as he marched along.

Had he been traveling that way of his own free will the scenic beauties would have greatly impressed him, but under the circumstances he did not enjoy it much.

He was wondering what was going to happen to him when he reached the destination to which he and his captors were bound.

What that destination was, or how far distant, he had not the faintest idea.

For more than an hour they maintained the same rapid pace, and Jack, unused to such a pace, began to show signs of weariness.

The scenery continued the same primeval kind of forest. The voice of nature was still, save for the buzzing of innumerable bush insects.

No birds raised their glad songs in the leafy solitudes. No wild beasts, of which there were plenty, showed themselves across their path.

But the insects were as gorgeously tinted as the great waxen, faintly-smelling flowers from which they drew their food; and brighter still were the scales of the carpet-snakes and the diamond-eyed serpents that glistened every now and then, as they lay coiled around, or hung dangling from the thick cordage of the creepers.

As time passed Jack began to lag in his walk, and the boss of the party began to prod him with his thumb.

This availed for a time, but not for long.

Seeing that the boy could not keep up with themselves, the man with the sharks'-teeth necklace ordered the natives who walked abreast of Jack to lift him between them on their shoulders.

They obeyed, and our hero proceeded more at his physical ease thereafter.

Hour after hour went by, and Jack marveled at the wonderful powers of endurance of the black men, who did not seem to be the least tired after the stretch of ground they had already covered.

About the hour of noon the party came to a glade or open space in the forest.

Here a halt was called for the first time.

In the middle of this clearing Jack saw the ashes of a large fire.

A number of earthenware vessels stood about the spot, all covered.

The boy wondered what they contained, and why they were there in that solitude.

While one of the natives started a small fire by primitive but nevertheless effectual methods, two other blacks uncovered two of the smaller hampers.

Another produced a kettle, went to a nearby stream, filled it partially with water, and brought it to the fire.

It was suspended over the blaze by a tripod.

After the water was heated a portion of the contents of one of the hampers was emptied into it.

Jack couldn't see what the stuff was, but for the reader's information we will say that it was live snails, which was considered a great delicacy, and had been collected by the king's party during the entire line of march to the sea-shore.

After the snails had been allowed to cook a certain time, handfuls of rice were added to this soup, and the fire stirred up.

In half an hour the snail soup was ready for distribution, and Jack was accorded a fair share.

The snails proved to be good eating, though they felt rather rubbery before he crunched them between his teeth.

The flavor of the soup itself was somewhat like stewed oysters, and as Jack was very hungry he relished it very much indeed.

Before resuming their line of march the kettle and other utensils used were carefully cleaned, and everything was returned to its former position for the subsequent use of the king and his escort on their return to the village.

Jack had to walk as long as his strength permitted him to keep pace with his captors, and then he was taken up again on the blacks' shoulders.

No pause was made until shortly after dark, when another clearing was reached, and here the party camped for the night, building four fires to keep away the wild animals that always roamed those solitudes during the hours of darkness.

Supper consisted merely of some rich cakes and the indigenous fruits plucked from the trees that grew around.

The party kept a watch by turns all night long, but if it was on account of their prisoner they might have saved themselves the trouble, for he was so footsore and weary that nothing could have induced him to try to take French leave that night.

As soon as he ate what was given him he turned over on the soft verdure, closed his eyes, and in a few minutes was sleeping as peacefully as on the preceding night when, so far as he knew, no unexpected developments hung over his head.

It may seem astonishing, but as a matter of fact the party Jack was with covered fifty miles that day, and they were not overtired at that.

A similar space was traversed on the following day up to dark, when the halt was made in the foothills of a chain of mountains for the evening meal on the bank of a long, shallow stream which they had forded with ease.

Instead of camping all night after supper, as they had done the night before, bamboo torches were lighted, and the march was resumed through a defile in the range.

An hour's travel through the mountains brought the party out into a long and wide valley.

Jack saw numerous lights in the distance, and concluded that they were approaching a village.

It was the village of Gobans, the chief kraal of the tribe, where the king resided, and where all the religious rites of the Tusk Hunters were celebrated on stated occasions established by custom at the temple of the goddess Gobabis.

One of the blacks was sent on ahead to announce their coming.

It took another hour to reach the suburbs of the kraal, during which the repose of the valley seemed undisturbed.

Then of a sudden Jack heard a swell of barbaric music in the distance.

Gongs, rattles, horns, drums, and other so-called musical instruments began to make night hideous.

And as these sounds drew nearer they were mingled with laughter, unearthly yells and what seemed like singing.

Presently, in turning the corner of a yellow bamboo-walled, green rush-thatched street, the party encountered a crowd of natives, of both sexes, nearly all of them carrying torches.

At first glance it might have been mistaken for a torch-light political procession such as one sees in the United States just before election.

Jack's idea was that something very important was going on among the natives of the valley.

He did not dream that it had any direct connection with himself.

The procession came on, opened out as the prisoner and his captors reached the head of it, and swallowed them up.

The crowd of enthusiastic blacks then turned back and marched with greater noise and demonstration than ever to the public square in the center of the village, which was large enough, Jack thought, to be rated as a town.

The procession separated into three parts, one of which filled up one side of the square, another the opposite side, while the third part formed the background facing the fourth side occupied by a large building and its appendencies, which was the idol house, for the Tusk Hunters worshiped a gigantic and hideous-looking image called Gobabis, from which the chief tribe took its name.

This image occupied the central and two-story section of the temple or house of the idol.

Jack and his captors were left conspicuously alone in the center of the square, surrounded on three sides by the people with their blazing torches throwing a lurid light all over the immediate neighborhood.

At the door or grand entrance to the temple stood the venerable brother of the king, who stood first in authority in the village when his royal relative was away.

He was attired in a rich and short toga like his royal highness, but the ornaments on his person were of a much simpler and less valuable character.

Beside him stood the high priest of the temple, who was dressed in a long white toga reaching to his sandals, and whose ornaments were plain bands of gold on his arms and wrists, while around his neck was a chain of superb precious stones to which was attached a sort of breastplate of solid, polished gold, set with myriads of diamonds that flashed and scintillated in the light cast by the torches.

On either side of these two ranged a row of ebony beauties, whose ages ran from twelve to twenty, and they were dressed in white frocks, with gold circlets and bracelets on their bare arms, and strings of different colored beads about their necks.

It seemed to Jack as if he and his captors were being accorded a royal reception, but that was because he didn't know any better.

Like the decorated calf marked for sacrifice, who plays with the flowers that designates its fate to every one but itself, Jack to a certain extent was interested and amused by the scene about him.

It was certainly a new and novel scene to his young eyes.

The nearest approach to such a scene he had viewed in some stage spectacle at a big New York theater, but there were elements of realism in this picture that no stage manager could supply, and a scenic background that no theater could furnish.

Had Jack been fettered, or threatened, or ill treated by his captors he would have approached the temple with many misgivings as to what fate had in store for him; but as nothing had so far happened to him beyond a curtailment of liberty of action, he did not expect that anything serious was in prospect.

The moment was approaching, however, when his confidence was to receive a rude jolt, which would awaken him to the stern reality of the situation.

CHAPTER IX.

FACE TO FACE WITH A TERRIBLE FATE.

When Jack and his captors arrived within a couple of yards of the spot where stood the king's brother and the chief priest of the idol house, all but the young American prostrated themselves humbly before the two black men.

Jack alone stood erect, and instinctively a defiant smile wreathed his lips as he looked curiously at the pair of ebony individuals who seemed to be the great moguls of the village.

When the crowd gathered on the three sides of the square saw that the prisoner did not humble himself before their great men, a low and prolonged murmur of surprise and disapprobation rose from the multitude, and they swung their torches to and fro.

No effort, however, was made to compel Jack to bow the knee.

The king's brother beckoned him forward.

The boy advanced a yard in front of his conductors, who rose to their feet again.

As if in response to some signal, a small black man, partially clad in European garments, appeared and placed himself beside Jack.

He was the royal interpreter, and the prisoner found that he spoke very good English.

Through this man Jack was questioned as to how he happened to be in Great Namaqua Land, and what had brought him there.

The young American told the interpreter his name, his

nationality, and how he had left the United States on a sea voyage for his health, bound for Cape Town.

He then explained how the brig had been caught in a violent storm and wrecked on the coast near where he had been captured by the black men.

All of the above was duly translated to the king's brother and high priest.

The interpreter then explained to Jack that he was in the country of the Gobabis, or Tusk Hunters.

That his coming had been foretold by the great goddess Gobabis, who designated him and a white girl captured a few days since to be offered as a special sacrifice for the recovery of the king from his illness.

The ceremony, which involved the death of the two young whites on the altar of the goddess would take place immediately on the return of the king from the seashore.

The girl was already confined in a section of the idol, and he would be placed in an adjoining one.

The interpreter assured Jack that both he and the girl had been accorded a high honor by the goddess, in consideration of which fact they would be treated to the fat of the land until the hour arrived for the sacrificial ceremonies.

To say that Jack was startled by the interpreter's communication, made with all the solemnity that the conditions demanded, would but mildly express the boy's feelings.

His utter helplessness in the midst of a strange and fanatical people, and a long distance from Christian civilization, fully impressed itself on Jack.

All he had ever read about the mysterious religious rites and weird customs of certain people living in various parts of the Dark Continent, flashed with appalling vividness across his mind at that strenuous moment.

As he entertained a strong personal objection to taking such a conspicuous part in an absurd sacrificial ceremonial, he put up a big kick to the interpreter.

The man, however, pretended to be astonished that he should entertain the least objection to the part assigned to him by the goddess.

He earnestly advised Jack not to show any signs of dissatisfaction lest the goddess change her mind, and order him to be disposed of in a less honorable and more painful way.

The interpreter proceeded to explain that to be disemboweled alive on the great altar, and his heart and liver consumed by the sacred fire, showed the distinguished consideration that the goddess entertained for both him and the girl who was to share the ceremony with him.

"Your spirits will be inhaled by the Great Gobabis, and you will become a part of herself," said the interpreter in a tone that implied he was imparting the most blissful intelligence which Jack ought to receive with great joy.

Such a feeling was very far from the boy at that moment.

It was with a sense of horror that he viewed his approaching fate.

He wondered what could be more painful or horrible than being disemboweled alive.

Well, there were several things practiced by the religious executioners of the Gobabis to turn their victims into fetiches, that carried more lingering torture in their train, for instance, sometimes a man or woman was bound naked at night to a post in the mountains and abandoned to the hungry jackals, who took advantage of their helplessness to feed upon them leisurely, generally beginning with their lower limbs.

As the beasts tore mouthfuls of quivering flesh away from the bones to satisfy their ravenous appetites, the victims suffered the quintessence of human agony.

Another method that was occasionally adopted, when a number of common victims were on hand, and which was greatly enjoyed by the inhabitants of the village, was the driving about the square of naked men and women, whose noses and ears had been previously sliced off and whose cheeks had been pierced by long iron skewers, to which their lips were noosed in the shape of the figure eight.

Their nude bodies were then made the mark for hundreds of prickly pears, cast at them by the onlookers, each one of which, as it struck the flesh, must have caused acute agony.

These tortures, however, were allotted only to those for whom the goddess was understood to have no interest.

To Jack and his unknown female companion in misfortune were accorded the highest of all sacrificial honors, that of yielding up their young lives on the great altar of Gobabis according to the accepted formula as described.

After the interpreter had withdrawn the young American was immediately marched inside the building, and into the presence of the gigantic wooden idol, which was hollow on the inside.

This figure was so large that it practically formed the whole of the central part of the idol house.

Its head rose above the surrounding green roofs, and the two holes that stood for eyes were lighted up at night with red lanterns, while green lanterns marked the grinning mouth, and two white lights close together indicated the nostrils.

The inhabitants of Great Nanagua Land believed that their deity never slept, night nor day, but kept perpetual watch over, and protected them.

Jack's conductors opened a cunningly-contrived door in the base of the idol, and led the boy inside, where everything was as dark as the fabled cave of Erebus.

He was pushed across the rough, uneven floor, and up what seemed to be a wooden stpladder, through a trapdoor into a room, in the stomach of the idol, which was lighted at that moment by the pale rays of the full moon shining through a small square open window, ten feet from the floor.

Here Jack was left alone, his conductors retiring by the way they had come.

Jack heard a bolt shoot in the trapdoor after they had disappeared, and he had no doubt but he was safely locked in the small apartment.

Hardly a sound reached the boy's ears now, as the inhabitants of the village had quickly dispersed to their huts after his disappearance within the temple.

"This is a pretty pickle I'm in," he muttered almost despairingly, for the outlook seemed very black indeed to him at that moment. "To be cut open alive on the great altar outside, along with some unfortunate white girl confined in this place with me, as soon as the king of this nation returns to the village. I wonder who the poor girl is that's slated to suffer with me, and how she came to fall into the hands of these fanatical people? Who would have thought a few days ago that I should be placed in such a terrible situation? It seems like an ugly nightmare. I can hardly believe I'm not dreaming it all. Yet there seems to be no doubt but I'm wide awake. Well, there's one satisfaction, I've got my revolver with me. If all hope fails me I can at least shoot myself at the last moment, and save myself the torture of that terrible ceremony. And I can shoot the girl, too, if she's within reach of a bullet."

While communing with himself Jack had been standing where his conductors had left him.

He now bethought himself of examining his prison.

First he tried the trapdoor and found, as he supposed, that it was fastened underneath.

To reach the window above appeared to be impossible, for the walls were of some varnished compound affording not the slightest foothold, curved, dome-like, outward beneath the window, doubtless to form one of the immense bosoms of the idol, which seemed to indicate that it was meant to represent a female divinity.

A partition divided the chest of the great figure apparently in two equal parts, and in the compartment on the other side Jack was satisfied the white girl prisoner was confined.

As Jack looked at the partition a strong desire to meet the poor girl on the other side of it took possession of him.

In spite of the hopelessness of his own situation a great sympathy for the hapless stranger filled his heart.

Her condition seemed to be even more desperate than his own.

He at least could put up a fight, however futile, for his life; but what could a poor weak girl do but be led like a lamb to slaughter?

The thought of what her despair must be at that moment nerved him to action.

He pointed on the partition, not with the idea of attracting her attention, and then, for the purpose of ascertaining what the wall was composed of, and whether there was a secret door anywhere in its surface.

While he had already ascertained that the rotund figure of the idol was made of hard, polished wood, capable of considerable resistance, he found that the partition was made of different material, like plaster.

In reality, it was built of cedar twigs and dried mud, a substance largely used in the construction of the better class houses in the village.

The idol had stood so long that this wall was very brittle, and a small battering-ram in the hands of two strong men would have made short work of it.

Jack had nothing more effective than the butt of his revolver to batter it with, and he did not consider that would make any impression on it.

So, instead of wasting time trying it he got out his strong jackknife, sprung open the blade and began to hack at the wall.

To his great satisfaction the substance began coming away in chunks, and he soon had quite a hole bored in the partition.

He kept on resolutely, and after he had dug in about a foot the blade of the knife went through on the other side.

He rapidly widened the hole and then peered through.

Nothing but an opaque darkness met his eye.

He called out several times to attract the other prisoner's attention, but received no reply.

"The poor thing is asleep," he said to himself. "I must keep on until I can make the hole large enough to crawl through."

He worked rapidly and with some enthusiasm, and the labor took his thought off his forlorn situation.

At length the hole was large enough for him to shove his head and shoulders through, which he did.

To his surprise he saw no duplicate window open to the moonlight, as was the case with his own prison.

The place was dark as pitch.

"Gee! That's funny. I could have sworn this other compartment was the counterpart of the one where I am. Seems to me it ought to be. Well, I must make my way through, anyway, and see if the poor girl is in there."

After muttering those words Jack resumed his work on the wall and presently a kick from his shoe pushed in a large piece of the wall, so that he was enabled to squeeze himself through.

Taking out his match-safe, he struck a lucifer.

When the light flared up he found to his astonishment that he wasn't in the next room at all, but in a narrow passage between the two rooms.

CHAPTER X.

A PLUCKY GIRL.

"So I've had all my work for nothing, at least, so far as reaching the girl is concerned," he said, striking a second match. "Maybe this passage might offer me an avenue of escape from the idol. If it does I'll see that the girl goes with me. No real American boy would desert a helpless girl to such a fate as faces this one as long as he could move a finger in her behalf."

With that chivalrous and unselfish resolve in his heart, Jack proceeded to explore the passage by matchlight.

He soon found a ladder leading upward.

He ascended it, and pushing his way through an uncovered trap landed in the head of the idol.

There he saw the green lanterns burning in the curved and narrow slit that represented the divinity's mouth, the two white lights that flashed through the nostril holes, and the red lights above, reached by two short ladders, that illuminated the eyes.

"Well, to think that any people could be so thick-headed as to be deceived by such a bogus arrangement as this. I'll bet the priest and his assistants who are running this image are simply playing the inhabitants, and the king as well, for all they are worth. Surely they themselves can't have any faith in a wooden statue that they have to illuminate in order to demonstrate that it's alive."

That's the way Jack argued as he stood in the head of the image and examined its internal architecture and the arrangements for hoodwinking the credulous worshipers.

Jack climbed one of the ladders and looked out through the great eye.

Below him lay the public square and a large part of the houses composing the village.

Not a light was visible anywhere, nor was the stillness broken by a sound.

Beyond spread out the green and fertile valley up to the foothills, with the imposing mountain range, rising peak on peak, forming the background to the picture, the whole illuminated by the moon, that hung like a burnished silver ball in the deep blue star-bedecked sky.

It was a scene well worth going miles to view, but not under such circumstances as Jack looked upon it.

However, that picture was never effaced from his memory. In after years, when safe and happy in America, he saw it in his dreams.

In spite of the perilous situation in which he stood, the beauty of that view held the boy entranced many minutes.

At length, conscious that precious moments were passing by, he descended the short ladder, and then the longer one to the passage below.

Another uncovered trap showed a ladder leading to the ground floor, and down this Jack went.

Here he found himself in another passage with two doorways, covered with cloth draperies, leading off at either side.

Pushing aside the one on the right, he entered a room the size of the apartment in which he had been imprisoned.

It was directly under the section of the idol where he supposed the girl to be confined.

A long ladder led up to a trap-door in the ceiling.

"By George!" cried Jack with renewed animation, "I'll bet that ladder will let me up into the compartment that's the duplicate of the one I was put in. All I'll have to do will be to shoot the bolt and open the trap-door. That's a whole lot easier than spending time and energy in breaking down the second wall upstairs that I calculated on having to do in order to reach the girl."

Jack immediately sprang up the ladder, found the bolt shot as he expected, opened it, threw back the trap-door and stepped into the moonlit room with the small window and bulging wall beneath it.

Looking around, Jack saw a female form stretched upon a couch of soft material similar to the one provided for himself in the other room.

Walking over, he touched the motionless object on the arm.

With a smothered cry the sleeper started up and gazed at him in a kind of dazed bewilderment.

The moonlight shone full on her face, and Jack at a glance saw that she was a lovely looking girl of perhaps seventeen years.

"Don't be alarmed, miss," he said in reassuring tones, without considering whether she would understand his language; "I've come to save you."

"Save me!" she exclaimed in pure English. "Save me!" she repeated, holding back the hair from her face and gazing at him in undisguised wonder. "Who are you?"

"I am Jack Cleveland, an American boy, and I will rescue you from the fate you face or die in the attempt."

"I, too, am an American," she said. "My name is Ada Ward. How came you to be here?"

"That is too long a story to tell you now. All I can say is that I was captured yesterday morning on the seacoast by some of the black rascals who inhabit this village. I was to share the same fate as yourself. But I hope to escape while the chance offers, and I am going to take you with me. If we should be overtaken we must die together. I will shoot you and then myself, for we must never participate in the horrible sacrifice for which we have been chosen. Come, now, let us go. Not a word of further explanation until we are clear of the village, if we are so fortunate as to be able to leave it alive."

"I understand you," the girl answered with wonderful composure, "and I thank you from my heart for your generous efforts in my behalf. Go on, I will follow. Be not afraid that I will flinch if peril overtakes us. I am the daughter of a colonel in the American army, and my ancestors shed their blood in the Revolutionary War. I hope I am worthy of the name I bear. At least, I shall not disgrace it in the hour of danger."

Jack looked at her in undisguised admiration.

This girl was no weakling, for courage and resolution shone in her eyes.

Clearly the blood of heroes ran in her veins, and instinctively the boy took his hat off to her, both literally and metaphorically.

"I'm glad to see that you're made of the right stuff, Miss Ward," he said. "If we get half a chance I'm willing to believe that we'll get off. You're just the kind of girl I admire, and if need be I'll go through fire and water to save you."

He turned away and descended the ladder.

The girl followed him at once, and was close behind him when he stepped on the ground floor.

Drawing his revolver, Jack stepped into the passage and cautiously walked to the rear end, where his sharp eyes

made out an open doorway, with the moonlit landscape beyond.

Not a human being was in sight.

Such a thing as guards about the idol house was not considered necessary, as no inhabitant ever approached nearer the temple than one hundred feet.

A terrible fate would have overtaken any native who was caught within the dead-line, as it might be called, and which was plainly marked by red paint.

Thus the priests protected the secrets of the temple, and maintained their acknowledged supremacy over the ignorant multitude.

How they drew the wool over the eyes of the king and his personal court was another matter that they were clever enough to get around.

"I'm sorry the moon is out so bright to-night, Miss Ward," said Jack. "It makes our escape from the village all the more difficult."

"Yes," she replied, "it's a handicap, but we must hope for the best."

"I don't see any one about, so we had better make a start. We must make for that green wall yonder. It will shade us from the moon's rays, and the further we get from the temple the safer we will be."

Thus speaking, Jack stepped out into the moonlight and Ada Ward followed, keeping close beside him.

Swiftly they crossed the brilliantly illuminated court behind the temple and were soon hastening along in the shadow of the leafy wall.

As there were no signs of an alarm they were satisfied that their exit from the idol house had not been observed, and their courage rose in consequence.

Still, they were only at the beginning of their desperate flight from the Tusk Hunters' village.

Hope hung in their minds only by a slender thread.

They dared hardly think what the future held for them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FLIGHT FROM THE VILLAGE.

The green lane took them into a long village street, the same one where the procession had met Jack and his captors that evening and then escorted them to the public square.

This street led straight to the defile in the mountains, and that was the point the boy and his fair companion were aiming for.

The street, however, was moonlit from end to end, with never a bit of shade to cover their retreat.

It seemed improbable that they could traverse it without attracting attention.

Yet they had to make the attempt.

No other avenue offered as direct a course, and as far as the moonlight went all were more or less illuminated, and offered the same chances of detection.

"We'll have to take our chances, Miss Ward," said Jack. "We can't remain here. Time is everything with us now. We must reach the defile as soon as possible and then trust to luck to get clear off."

They took the middle of the road, and though Jack was dead tired after his day's exertions, he stepped out like a little major, for his life, and the life of his companion, depended on their getting out of the village, and as far from it as they could, before their escape was discovered.

Of course they would be immediately pursued by men whose tireless locomotive powers Jack had abundant evidence of.

But he knew once they had gained the open country, to catch them would be like hunting for a needle in a haystack, unless their enemies were exceptionally good trailers, and enough of them engaged in the hunt.

As silent as shadows they passed down the street, expecting at any moment to hear a hue and cry raised behind them.

Nothing of the sort happened, and they reached and passed the last house in the village outskirts with thankful hearts.

They had still a considerable stretch of level, tree-covered ground to cover before they could enter the defile, but the chance of their retreat being interrupted now was small in comparison to what it was while they were within the limits of the village itself.

Neither felt inclined to talk as yet—the tension was too great on their nerves as long as the thatched roofs of the houses remained in sight and they could make out in the distance the red eyes of the goddess Gobabis.

At last they reached the entrance to the defile, and here they paused from sheer exhaustion, Jack being utterly done up.

"It doesn't seem as if I could go a step farther, even to save my life," he said to the girl, who, having rested all day in her prison, was the brightest of the two at this moment.

"Well, we can rest here in safety a little while, I think," she replied. "Though it is true we have the village in full view from this elevation."

"While we are resting will you tell me how you got into the power of those Tusk Hunters, as I understand they are called."

"Certainly," she replied; "but that you may understand my story rightly it will be necessary to explain how I, a resident of the city of New York, happen to be in the wilds of South Africa."

It is unnecessary that we should follow Miss Ward through her narrative which took her more than an hour to tell, while the two young people, so strangely thrown together, sat at the mouth of the defile and gathered strength enough to resume their flight.

Being a motherless girl, and living with an aunt in New York while her father was stationed in the Philippines, at the time when the American forces there were engaged in the dangerous and troublesome duty of subduing the natives opposed to United States occupation, she decided to accept the invitation of another aunt, who had married a British subject, and settled in Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope, to visit South Africa.

She had been three months at her aunt's home, and was thinking about returning to the United States, when an opportunity was afforded her to visit an ostrich farm in the northern part of the district.

She accepted the invitation and went to the farm, which was nearly 400 miles from Cape Town.

Here she spent two delightful weeks and was preparing to go back to Cape Town with the party who had escorted her to the farm, when she was surprised alone in a patch of woods by a party of natives, who proved to be Tusk Hunters, returning from the coast after bringing a load of ivory to a trading post.

Ada said they gagged and bound her, and put her into the cart they had with them, which was drawn by oxen, and carried her to a small village across the border-line into Great Namaqua Land.

Here she said she was kept under the charge of the chief women of the tribe for two days, and then, accompanied by a retinue of females, was sent on to the chief village of Gobabis, where she arrived two days after.

Here she was informed that her arrival was foretold by the goddess, and that she was specially selected as a human sacrifice in order to facilitate the recovery of the king from a serious illness.

She was told that the honor conferred upon her of being offered up on the altar of the goddess was something she ought to appreciate, as a similar sacrifice had not taken place in several years, and was only put in force on occasions of great emergency like the present when the king's life was in danger.

She was treated with great consideration, and had everything she wanted except her liberty.

The sacrificial method had not been explained to her like it was to Jack by the interpreter, and she was therefore ignorant of the horrible ceremony which had confronted her.

Jack, however, told her what they had both escaped, and said that was the reason why he was resolved on shooting her and himself in the event of their recapture becoming inevitable.

For the first time the girl's nerve was shaken, and she almost collapsed as the horror of the thing impressed itself upon her.

"Don't give way, Miss Ward," said Jack, putting his arm around her. "I will protect you with my life and save you if it is possible."

"You are a brave and noble boy," she said, throwing her arms around his neck and kissing him in an impulsive way. "I know you will do all you can for me, and I am deeply grateful to you. Should we escape I shall never, never forget what I owe you."

"I consider that it is my duty to protect you to the extent

of my power. You may rely on me to the last. Come, now, I think we had better push on till we can find some spot where we can get a good long rest under conditions that promise some kind of temporary security at least."

Taking a last look at the Tusk Hunters' village, which slept peacefully under the declining rays of the moon, they struck through the defile as rapidly as possible.

It took them an hour and a half to reach the shallow stream, forded by Jack and his captors the evening before.

Here they paused for another rest, and then, lest their enemies would be able to track their footsteps in the dust of the long mountain road, Jack said that it would be advisable for them to take to the stream, where they would leave no tracks.

Gathering as large a supply of fruit from the trees at this point as they thought they could carry, and removing their shoes and stockings, they entered the stream and turned their faces down the narrow river, which ran south-westward.

They kept steadily on their way till some time after sunrise, when Jack spied a dense mass of bushes on the side of the mountain.

As they were so wearied that they could scarcely go much further, anyway, he decided to use the bushes as a place of concealment.

The ground being rocky all the way up to the spot, they would not leave any tracks betraying the fact that they had left the stream at that point.

On reaching the bushes they discovered that the thick shrubbery concealed a dark-looking cave, the depths of which they could not judge even after Jack had lighted a match and walked back some distance.

It seemed to lead back straight through the mountains.

Jack made out a shelf about twenty feet high, and believing it would afford an excellent roosting place for them while they remained in the cave, and perhaps save them from discovery in the event that their enemies entered the place in search of them, he pointed it out to the girl and told her that he would help her up there.

She was quite satisfied to go anywhere that her plucky young protector suggested, and inside of fifteen minutes both of them were sleeping the sleep of utter weariness on the rocky shelf.

CHAPTER XII.

ATTACKED IN THE CAVE.

The village of Gobabis awoke with one accord at sunrise, and the women folks began to prepare the morning meal for their households.

One of the under priests of the temple, whose duty it was to go up into the head and extinguish the lights in the lanterns, discovered the hole in the wall of the passage made by Jack Cleveland.

Creeping himself into the room where the prisoner had been left, he found that it was empty.

He hurried to the quarters of the chief priest and gave the alarm.

The investigation that followed disclosed the flight of the girl, too.

This raised a terrible hullabaloo.

The king's brother was notified, and inside of a short time a strong party of natives was scouring the outskirts of the village, with orders to extend their search into the mountains, particularly in the direction of the pass.

A second party was sent up the valley, and a third party in the opposite direction, while a fourth was sent across the valley toward the second chain of mountains.

No stone was left unturned to recapture the fugitives, for the head priest represented that some dreadful calamity would be visited on the village by the goddess if her victims got clear off.

While all this was going on Jack and Ada slept peacefully in the mountain cave, dreaming possibly of their homes in America.

The sun climbed up into the sky and passed the meridian and still they slept on, like two weary children.

The afternoon passed away and five o'clock came.

Then Jack woke up, feeling like a new boy.

He proceeded to make a meal off the fruit they had gathered the night before, and while he was eating Ada opened her eyes and sat up.

"Help yourself, Miss Ward," he said, pushing one of the bundles toward her.

"Thank you," she answered sweetly. "But don't call me Miss Ward. Call me Ada. We are comrades in misfortune, and it seems almost as if I had known you for a long time instead of only a few hours. At any rate, we should not stand on ceremony now."

"All right, and you must call me Jack."

"Of course," she replied with a smile.

"I wonder what the Tusk Hunters are doing about this time?" he said.

"I don't care what they are doing, as long as they don't track us here," she replied.

"I wish you had a revolver, too," said Jack. "Then we'd be able to make things quite lively for any party that overtook us."

"I wish I had, for I can shoot some."

Jack took advantage of the opportunity to tell the girl how he came to be in Africa himself, concluding his narrative with the wreck of the brig.

"I wonder what time it is? It's so dark in here that it's impossible to say whether night has come around again or not. We must have slept a good while, for I feel like a top again. I wouldn't be surprised if it was after dark."

Finally Jack said he was going to the mouth of the cave to look out.

He was about to descend from the shelf when Ada caught him by the arm.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I thought I heard a noise near the entrance."

Jack deferred getting down for the present, and both listened attentively.

Clearly there was a sound among the bushes outside.

Jack stretched himself out at full length and peered over the edge of the shelf in the direction of the entrance.

Presently he saw a shadowy figure spring into the cave, followed by a second, a third and a fourth.

That they were natives on their track could scarcely be doubted.

"We must be silent for our lives," Jack whispered in the girl's ear.

Their eyes were so accustomed to the gloom that they plainly saw the figures advance into the cave, groping their way forward.

The blacks stopped and held a consultation.

Then they returned to the entrance again and the fugitives hoped they were about to leave.

They were disappointed, however, for instead of departing they were joined by others.

They all gathered just inside of the mouth of the cave, and one of the natives proceeded to make a fire in their usual primitive fashion.

This took time, but at length half a dozen torches were ignited and the party advanced into the cave again.

There were eight of them in all, fine strapping blacks, with glistening skin, and teeth that would have been the envy of a civilized lady.

They passed under the rocky shelf, waving their torches to and fro, and finally disappeared into the bowels of the earth.

Jack and Ada waited impatiently for them to come back, but they didn't.

"This must be a pretty long cave, or something is keeping them back yonder," said Jack at length. "I don't hear a sound from them."

An hour passed and Jack was getting uneasy when they heard more noise at the entrance and more figures came into the cave.

They stopped, and soon the fugitives saw lights begin to flicker.

Then the new party came forward with lanterns, similar to those used in the temple, in their hands.

One of the party did not seem to be a black man, and was dressed in trousers, shirt, coat and hat.

He was short in stature and somewhat thin.

As the party drew near the shelf the boy gave a gasp of surprise.

The person in the European attire was Noah Webb, and he seemed to be the boss of the bunch.

He talked to and ordered them around in their native lingo.

He cocked his eye up at the shelf as they came up with it and called a halt.

He said something to one of the natives and the fellow knew what was going to happen.

Their hearts jumped into their throats as his head appeared above the edge of the rock.

Although they saw him clearly enough, he did not seem to see them.

He called down to Webb and was going to descend when the rascal stopped him and handed up a lantern.

The black flashed its light on the shelf and of course saw the fugitives at once.

He gave a cry of triumph and jumped up to grab Jack.

There was the flash and report of a revolver, and with a death howl on his lips the Tusk Hunter lost his balance and tumbled down among his companions, where he squirmed around and clawed at the ground.

"It's all up with us, I fear," said Jack to the girl. "At any rate, I'll sell our lives as dearly as possible. There's one thing I can't understand, and that is the person in charge of this bunch is the rascally chap I told you we picked up at sea a few days before the brig was wrecked on the coast. He seems to be right in with these fellows, for he talks to them in their own tongue."

At that point Noah Webb called out in English.

"Better come down and give yourselves up, for you can't get away. I'll see that nothing happens to you," he said persuasively.

Jack looked down at the party below.

"So you're there, Noah Webb?"

"Yes, I'm here," grinned the scoundrel.

"What are you doing in the company of those natives?"

"Come down and I'll tell you all about it."

"Sorry, but we can't afford to take any chances."

"You're not takin' any chances as long as I'm around. I'll protect you and the girl you have with you."

"No," replied Jack in a determined tone, "I'm going to protect myself and the girl, too, as long as I can, and then you and your crowd can have what's left of us."

"You can't avoid capture, for we've got you trapped. If you do any more shootin' I won't be able to save you. Better give up and come down peaceably."

"We won't come down. If you want us you'll have to come and take us," replied the boy defiantly.

Jack's answer nettled Webb.

Suddenly he thrust his hand into his shirt, drew out a revolver and fired hastily at the boy.

The ball whistled by Jack's ears.

The fellow's treacherous action, though quite in keeping with his past record, made the boy mad.

He raised his revolver and fired back.

Webb tried to avoid the shot, but it caught him in the shoulder-blade and he uttered a terrible roar, his revolver dropping from his fingers.

Then, holding his wounded shoulder, he ordered the blacks to storm the shelf and capture the fugitives at all cost.

The natives obeyed his order and began swarming up the wall.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH JACK FINDS A DIAMOND MINE.

Jack planted himself in front of Ada and fired three shots in rapid succession at as many blacks.

Every bullet took effect and they went tumbling back on the floor with cries of pain.

Two more of the natives stopped and then retreated of their own accord.

Jack took advantage of the chance to refill the chambers of his revolver with fresh cartridges from his pocket.

Then he stood and awaited the next move on the part of their enemies.

They appeared to be in no hurry to renew the attack, as their reception had been too warm to suit them.

Out of the party of nine only four of the natives had not suffered some injury.

Webb was nursing his wounded shoulder, one of the Tusk Hunters, the first man who had attacked Jack, was dead, and three others were more or less badly hurt.

The boy determined to put them to rout if he could while they were demoralized, so he opened fire on the uninjured chaps, aiming at their legs.

Two went down like ninepins, and all the others capable of moving started for the entrance of the cave, leaving their lanterns on the floor.

Webb followed them in a hurry, forgetting to pick up his revolver.

Jack resolved to get possession of it for Ada, so he slipped down and picked it up.

He also carried back one of the lanterns with him, in order to throw a light down from the shelf in the event of another attack, which, however, he did not anticipate right away.

As soon as he regained the shelf he handed Webb's revolver to Ada.

"There," he said, "you'll be able to take a hand in the next scrimmage. This bunch seems to have had all they want. They won't attack us again, as only two of them are unwounded. One of them will probably go and hunt up reinforcements, while Webb and the other four who got back to the entrance will try and keep us from leaving the cave."

The light of the lantern illuminated the face of the rock at the back of the shelf, and showed an opening there which Ada was first to notice.

She called Jack's attention to it.

He grabbed the lantern and flashed the light inside.

"It's a passage in the rock leading somewhere," he said.

"I think we had better retreat into it, for we could not hold off a large force of the blacks if they attacked us on the shelf. Only one of them could enter this passage at a time, and we could do them up singly as long as our bullets held out."

Jack decided to see where the passage led to.

With the lantern in his hand he started ahead, followed by the girl.

After proceeding a hundred feet there still seemed to be no end to it.

They followed the many windings of the passage for two hundred feet more, when they came to another opening which let them out into a tunnel.

This was really the continuation of the cave, down which the first party of blacks had gone, and whose return Jack and Ada had looked for in vain, but the two fugitives did not know it.

"I'm afraid we're going right into the mountain," said the girl after they had followed the tunnel a bit.

"Well, what's the odds?" replied Jack. "I don't see any chance of our leaving the cave for some time, so we might as well see how far this tunnel goes."

Fifty feet more brought them to a sharp turn, and then to their great joy they saw the light of day right ahead of them, shining through a large opening.

"That must be a defile in the range," said Jack. "We're in great luck. Now we can give Webb and his black crowd the slip while they think they have us cooped up. Before they discover their mistake we'll be out of their reach."

They emerged into a gorge carpeted with green verdure and thickly dotted with trees.

Jack threw the rude lantern away and he and Ada hustled forward.

The gorge widened into a small valley covered with vegetation interspersed with many trees.

On both sides of them rose the mountain heights, peak on peak.

It was quite dark by the time they reached the end of the valley and entered another defile.

They had no intention of pausing as long as they could make any headway at all, so they plunged ahead without regard to natural obstacles.

Myriads of stars came out and lighted them on their way.

Sometimes they ascended steep paths on the mountain-side, and sometimes they descended similar ones.

When they grew tired they stopped to rest, talk and get better acquainted with each other.

Jack thought they were working southward in the direction they had followed after leaving the defile that led to Gobabis village, but they were actually going due west now, toward the coast.

After traversing many miles of the trackless range they came to another cave which looked so inviting that they decided to finish the night there.

Jack watched while the girl slept, with his shoulder for a pillow.

He awoke her at sunrise, and she kept watch while he slept for about two hours.

They ate the rest of their fruit for breakfast and resumed their retreat.

They traveled all that day with nothing more to eat,

though they slaked their thirst several times at clear mountain streams.

They saw no signs of their pursuers, and hoped they had thrown the Tusk Hunters off their track.

About dark they entered another long and narrow valley, and the first thing they saw was a bunch of fruit trees similar to those from which they had plucked the fruit outside of the pass leading to the village.

They halted and had supper, such as it was, and then after gathering as much of the fruit as they could carry, they resumed their journey at a leisurely pace.

They traveled nearly all night again, and morning found them some way up the mountains.

Coming to a thick bunch of bushes, they crawled into the patch and were soon sound asleep in the African solitude.

The sun was up when they awoke, and after another meal of fruit they resumed their way through the mountains.

Nothing happened to break the monotony of their journey till about noon, when the course they were following carried them to the outside of the range and they saw a large village in the distance, which Jack said was probably another of the kraals of the Tusk Hunters.

At sundown they reached another valley which appeared to mark the end of the mountain range in that direction, and they camped by a small stream and finished their supply of fruit.

"We'll have easier traveling to-day," said Jack next morning, "for our way lies across this big valley. The chief drawback that confronts us now is to find something to eat. These bushes are loaded with luscious-looking berries, but whether it is safe to eat them is a question."

As they were very hungry and the berries looked good, they decided to sample them, with the result that, finding them very palatable, they filled up on them.

About noon they suddenly came upon a solitary hut in a small clearing.

As there did not appear to be anybody about they looked in at the open door.

The place showed many signs of occupancy.

They entered and the boy presently uttered an exclamation of satisfaction on discovering a big bowlful of boiled rice, together with a basket loaded with different kinds of luscious fruits.

They also found a species of cake made from some kind of maize.

Putting the bowl of rice and the cake into the basket along with the fruit, they grabbed the handles of the basket between them and left the hut as speedily as possible, for they did not want to be discovered there by the inhabitant.

After walking half a mile they sat down and made a meal off a portion of their provender.

The food lasted them for two days, by which time they were drawing near the coast, though they were not aware of the fact.

On the third day after leaving the hut they stopped in a picturesque glade to finish the last of the rice and the fruit.

"What are those things yonder?" asked Ada, as they were resting after their frugal meal, pointing at three curious-looking objects on the ground a few yards away.

Jack got up and walked over to examine them.

"Why, they're elephants' tusks," he said. "Ivory in the rough. If we had any means of carrying them away they'd be worth something to us."

Jack lifted one of the tusks and found it very heavy.

As he dropped it he saw a small excavation in the ground at his feet.

There were a number of odd-looking stone-like substances in it about the size of pebbles lying in some blue clay in which there was an indentation.

One of them gave off a scintillating light, as though studded with bits of mirror-glass.

Jack picked it up and examined it intently.

"Come here, Ada," he said excitedly. "I've found a large diamond in the rock."

The girl came over and looked at it.

"Are you sure it's a diamond?" she asked.

"Positive. Professor Casey, under whose guardianship I made the voyage to this country, and who perished with the rest of the brig's company on the wreck, explained the whole diamond industry to me. I can tell a rough diamond when I see it as good as anybody, but the matrix or covering of this one is so much rubbed off that almost anybody

would suspect it to be a diamond. See how it flashes in different places. I'll bet this diamond after cutting would be worth a whole lot of money. I wonder if there are any more specimens in this hole? Yes, I can see several even from here. Maybe we've struck a real diamond mine."

As Jack and Ada stood gazing at the hole containing the rough diamonds a rustling among the bushes startled them.

Looking up, they saw that they were surrounded by a crowd of Kaffirs, two of whom threatened them with their spears.

CHAPTER XIV.

DIAMONDS TO BURN.

Jack and his companion were taken completely by surprise, and before either could draw their revolver the ugly-looking spears of the two foremost blacks were pressed against their breasts, while a dozen other natives, similarly armed, quickly surrounded them.

Towering above the party, on the edge of the bushes, was a majestic-looking man of middle age mounted upon an elephant.

Without the slightest chance to defend themselves the game seemed to be up at last for the two fugitives.

At that critical moment a terrible roar filled the glade.

Something big and tawny came through the air like a meteor, sweeping Jack and the girl to the ground like the passing of a tornado and landing on the two blacks who held the spears.

Cries of consternation and terror went up from the other natives, who instantly turned and fled from the clearing as fast as they could go, leaving their two companions struggling in the grasp of a huge African lion—one of the largest of his species.

The man on the elephant seemed anxious to get away in a hurry, too, for he jabbed an iron-pointed implement he held in his hand into the hide of the unwieldy animal, and shouted out some command to him.

The lion paid no attention to either him or his elephant but there was trouble in store for him just the same.

A large lioness, who had accompanied the lion to the spot, marked him for her prey, and sprang on the elephant's flank from the thick bushes.

The elephant trumpeted in terror and started off on a run, the lioness clinging to her hold and trying to reach the man, who jabbed at her with his pointed weapon with very little effect.

They soon vanished among the trees at railroad speed.

Jack and Ada, partially stunned by the shock they had sustained, lay motionless on the ground.

The lion, after killing one of the blacks by a blow of his paw, seized the other half-dead man by the nape of the neck and dragged him off into the bushes en route to his lair, wherever that was.

Thus in an incredibly short space of time the whole complexion of matters was changed in that quiet little glade.

Jack was the first to recover, and when he sat up and looked around not a black man was in sight but the dead victim of the lion.

The boy was so bewildered that he hardly understood what had happened.

His first thought was for his fair companion, who lay with pallid face and closed eyes close beside him.

As he raised her tenderly in his arms, his heart beating with anxiety about her, she opened her eyes and gazed up in his face in a dazed way.

"Ada, are you hurt?" he said eagerly.

"I don't know. I feel no pain. What happened to me?" she replied.

"Blessed if I can tell exactly what did happen. It seemed to me as if we were knocked down by some tremendously strong animal. It must have been a lion, for just before the shock came I heard a terrible roar."

"So did I," replied the girl. "Then—then the next thing I knew I seemed to be swept into the land of nowhere."

She released herself from Jack's embrace and sat up.

"Why, there isn't a sign of—yes, there's one there, and he seems to be dead," said Ada, pointing at the motionless Kaffir.

Jack got up and looked at the man.

"He was knocked out by a savage beast, all right," he

said. "His body is torn by the animal's claws, and he's as dead as a coffin-nail."

"Its sudden appearance was a fortunate thing for us."

"I should say so. Those blacks had us dead to rights. The beast evidently scattered them to the winds, and we are free to go on our way."

As he spoke his eyes rested again on the hole where the rough diamonds lay, and the sight of them drove thoughts of immediate departure from his mind.

The dead Kaffir was not a pleasant sight for Ada's eyes, so Jack dragged his body off into the bushes.

Then he returned to the hole and began taking out the rough diamonds in sight.

The supply, however, only amounted to eight, in addition to the original one that Jack had put in his pocket.

Taking out his jackknife, he started to turn up the ground in and around the hole.

Results immediately followed.

Rough matrices of hard metallic blue clay, in which the diamond was imbedded, turned up with such frequency that the boy was satisfied he had struck a new diamond field.

Ada became just as enthusiastic as Jack over the diamond question.

She got the basket, which was a close wicker one, and tossed the matrices into it as fast as Jack brought them to light, and he worked away as rapidly as though he were hunting for a lot of buried twenty-dollar gold pieces.

Time passed quickly away under the circumstances, and by the time the basket was half full of rough diamonds the sun was sinking down in the western sky.

After looking at the bunch they had secured Jack reluctantly called a halt in the work.

"There are diamonds to burn here, all right," he said; "but they'll never do us any good. Some day in the future when the white people get a foothold in this part of Africa this new diamond field will be rediscovered and the finders will grow enormously wealthy, like the owners of the Kimberly mines. However, we've had the first whack at it, and that will amount to something if we can get what's in that basket to Cape Town. Of course, the dealers in rough diamonds will be very anxious to learn where we got these specimens. Maybe I'll be able to form a company of enterprising men and bring them out here, securing a good percentage of all the diamonds dug up. I wouldn't be surprised but I could do that, but it's too soon to talk about such a thing. A fellow ought not to shout before he's out of the woods, and we're not out yet, by a long shot."

The basket did not seem particularly heavy till they had gone about half a mile on their way, but after that it seemed to grow heavier with every few yards.

"I guess we've undertaken quite a contract to carry these diamonds with us," said Jack when they were forced to sit down and rest.

"I'm afraid we have," agreed the girl. "We won't be able to go near so fast."

"I suppose not, and we've got a long way to go."

They were still in Great Namaqua Land, and liable to recapture by their enemies, the Tusk Hunters.

In fact, for all they knew to the contrary, it might take a week or two of steady traveling before they could reach the land of Cape of Good Hope to the south.

Then there was the question of food to consider.

"I'm afraid we don't eat to-night, Ada," said Jack as the gloom of evening fell upon the landscape.

She leaned her head on his shoulder and said nothing.

"I'm dead sorry for you, little girl," he said in a sympathetic tone, stroking the hair about her forehead, "but I don't see what I can do to better the situation."

"You can't do anything more than you have done, Jack," she replied, throwing one arm caressingly around his neck.

Jack put his arm around her waist, drew her to him and kissed her.

CHAPTER XV.

THE AMBUSH.

The howl of some wild animal in the distance recalled Jack to the realities of the present and he got up.

"There's a hill about a mile ahead of us," he said. "We must go on as far as that to-night. We may find some hole in the side of it where we can crawl in and sleep. It is hardly safe for us to remain out in the open."

As they drew near the hillside they stopped to rest under a tree.

On the ground Jack noticed some decayed fruit.

In another moment he was eagerly looking up into the branches of the tree.

Lighting one of his few remaining matches, he held the flame high above his head.

The tree was loaded with fruit.

He climbed up the slender trunk and threw down a good supply, on which they feasted like very hungry people, indeed.

What was left over he piled into the basket on top of the rough diamonds.

When they reached the foot of the hill their hearts were further gladdened by the sight of a stream of fresh water.

They drank long and greedily of the water and then began their slow and laborious ascent of the hill.

"Say," said Jack suddenly and with a new ring to his voice, "I don't think we can be more than fifty miles, if as far as that, from the coast. The village of Gobabis is only two big days' journey on foot from it. We've been traveling both south and west since we made our escape. Now, if we were to make straight for the shore, and then travel back northward as far as that little creek where I left my boat in the rushes, why, we'd be right in it. I've a big supply of provisions from the brig in the boat, fully enough to last us for a good while, and that rascal Webb said there is a white settlement on some bay within a hundred miles south. We could carry the diamonds easily by boat, and we wouldn't have to walk any more. I think we can't do better than to make right for the shore and hunt the boat up. To continue our original plan of walking straight south till we came to some ostrich or other farm looks like an endless job, even were we not encumbered with the diamonds. Besides, we are always liable to be retaken by some party of blacks as long as we are on the land. In a boat we would be quite safe from that danger."

Jack went to work and made a roofless nook for themselves with the stones and earth for the night, which he hoped would offer protection against any wild beast that came that way.

Then they went to sleep and were not disturbed even by the night cries of the wandering beasts.

The sun was well up when they awoke.

Breaking down the entrance, they stepped outside, made a meal of fruit and resumed their way toward the summit of the hill in a westerly direction.

There, spread out before them as far as the eye could reach, and not two miles away, was the Atlantic Ocean.

What was still more amazing to Jack was the fact that he recognized the locality as being the identical spot, or its duplicate, of the point at which he had come ashore on the evening before his capture.

Jack pointed out all the features of the landscape to Ada.

"Talk about luck!" he exclaimed. "This beats anything in that line I ever heard of. Now all we've got to do is to walk down to the head of that creek, and we shall find the boat—that is," he added with an anxious frown, "if the natives who were here with the king didn't find it and appropriate its contents."

When Noah Webb was wounded and his party of blacks beaten off by the fugitives in the cave, Webb had done just what Jack supposed he would do—he stationed the least injured of his bunch around the entrance of the cave to prevent the escaped prisoners from getting out, and sent the only unwounded man post-haste back to the village for reinforcements.

His rage and disappointment were intense when, finding they had disappeared, he learned that there was a rear exit from the cave through the tunnel at the back.

He despatched most of his men into the ravine after the fugitives, but as they took a different course from that followed by Jack and Ada they failed to overtake their quarry.

Before Jack and Ada had been located at the cave a large party had started through the long forest under the impression that the fugitives had retreated that way toward the coast.

Webb knew that Jack had come down the coast that far in a boat, and he set the blacks to work searching for it.

They discovered it without much trouble, and then Webb set a trap in the vicinity of the concealed boat, which he did not for the present disturb, in order to surprise Jack and Ada in the event that they succeeded in eluding the other parties on their trail, and reached the shore.

Jack and Ada were blissfully unconscious that they were walking into an ambush prepared especially for them.

They came toward the head of the creek, with the basket of rough diamonds between them, and when within an eighth of a mile of the spot Webb, who was watching the country around from the lower branches of a tall tree, discovered them.

Slipping down the smooth trunk, he notified his men that the fugitives were coming that way, then he hid himself in the grass opposite the ambushade and waited for the escaped prisoners to come up, when, on his signal, the blacks were to rush out and capture them.

At last they reached the edge of the trap and put down the basket, then Jack, leaving the girl, started ahead to see if his boat was still where he had left it.

At that critical moment the unexpected happened.

A small, but particularly venomous, snake came crawling through the grass close to Webb.

Just then the rascal drew back a bit further into the grass and accidentally trod on the reptile.

Like a flash of light its head darted forward with a loud, angry hiss and sunk its fangs into Webb's calf—once, twice, thrice.

The rascal uttered a scream and sprang into the air, rolling out of the tall grass.

Jack stopped like a shot and his hand went to his revolver.

The blacks, mistaking Webb's screams for the signal agreed upon, rose up and rushed out into the open.

"Out with your revolver, Ada, and shoot as they come up!" he cried hurriedly.

A fusillade of revolver shots greeted the approach of the blacks, and threw them into confusion, for every bullet met a mark.

Then grabbing the girl by the hand, Jack dragged her into the tall grass, which closed behind them just as the natives darted forward again.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

A couple of the blacks remained behind to see what was the matter with Webb, who was rolling in agony on the ground, the deadly poison coursing through his veins like liquid fire.

Jack and Ada rushed through the tall grass with the enemy in hot pursuit and overtaking them rapidly.

One big Tusk Hunter outstripped his fellows and sighted the fugitives just as they reached the edge of the forest.

He reached forward and seized Ada by the arm.

The girl uttered a scream as she felt his clutch and Jack turned about.

Thrusting his revolver against the fellow's broad chest, he pulled the trigger.

Down went the native with a bullet in his heart.

Jack then pulled Ada into a thick clump of bushes and there they sank down and remained as silent as two mice.

Of the original dozen blacks that had composed the ambush only four now came into sight.

Two were back with Webb, five had gone down under the first rapid fire of the fugitives, and one Jack had just shot.

They set up a jabbering when they discovered the dead man, and then scattered through the forest.

As soon as they were out of sight Jack led Ada back through the grass toward the creek again, but in a roundabout way.

When they reached the vicinity of the ambush Jack, to his amazement, beheld Webb lying stark dead and stiff on the ground.

Jack felt that now was his opportunity to look up the boat.

Leaving Ada hidden in the grass, he stole over to the creek and knowing just where to look, he found the boat as he had left her about a week since.

Running back to the girl, he led her to the boat and told her to get in.

With that Jack hurried away on his quest for the basket of diamonds, which he soon secured, and flew back to the boat.

As he handed the basket over the gunwale of the boat

three of the six blacks on their trail came running back in answer to the cries of the wounded men.

Jack had just time to step into the boat and push off when they rushed up to the edge of the creek.

Ada discharged her last bullet at the foremost, and he tumbled into the water with a death-cry on his lips.

The other two leaped into the creek and swam for the boat.

Jack handed his revolver to Ada and told her to keep them off while he rowed backward down the creek.

As one of the rascals put his hand on the gunwale of the boat the resolute girl leaned forward and shot him in the face.

She then fired at the other, who was so close that she couldn't miss him.

The bullet entered his windpipe and he sank with a gurgle in the stream.

The other three blacks now came up to the edge of the stream and flung their spears after the fugitives.

The runaways escaped unhurt, and soon were at a safe distance from shore.

After rowing six or seven miles Jack pulled in to the shore, which was evidently deserted, for a rest and to eat dinner.

Six days later they rounded a point of land opening up a bay and a white settlement of a hundred or more houses and stores, while several sloops and schooners rode at anchor in the little harbor.

They were received in a hospitable way by the head man of the settlement, who invited them to stay at his house till arrangements could be made to send them on to Cape Town by water.

Jack said nothing about the diamonds which he had nailed up in one of the provision boxes, and two weeks later he and Ada stepped ashore with their box of treasure on one of the wharves at Cape Town.

Ada took Jack with her to her aunt's home, where word had just been received by her relatives from the ostrich farm that the girl had unaccountably disappeared two weeks since, and it was feared she had been kidnaped by some wandering party of Tusk Hunters who were occasionally seen in that vicinity.

The diamonds were submitted to experts, who estimated their value at \$150,000 in English money, and this sum was paid over to Jack for them.

Jack offered half to Ada, but she refused to take more than one-third of the money.

With the assistance of Ada's uncle an expedition was fitted out to visit the site of the new diamond field.

Jack, of course, accompanied it as guide.

The party proceeded up the coast in a schooner, and on reaching the scene of the young people's adventures on the creek came to anchor.

Jack led a strongly-armed party in the direction of the glade where he had discovered the diamonds.

They had a good deal of trouble in finding it, but they did at last.

The ground was then dug over, and something like a million dollars' worth of rough gems found.

That seemed to exhaust the mine, and after digging a while longer with unsatisfactory results the party returned to Cape Town with the results of the trip.

Jack received a quarter of the net results after all expenses had been paid and this gave him something over \$200,000 more.

He and Ada then set out for the United States by a steamer via the Azores and Southampton, reaching New York in due time.

Jack went back to school looking as brown as a berry, and as strong and hearty as an ox.

Although it is several years since the events just described happened, and Jack and Ada are the happiest of wedded couples, they never recall without a thrill the brief but strenuous time they had among the Tusk Hunters.

Next week's issue will contain "A GAME BOY; OR, FROM THE SLUMS TO WALL STREET."

Send Postal for Our Free Catalogue.

HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

IT IS IN OUR POWER TO HOLD THE WOLF FROM THE DOOR OF THE WORLD.

Mr. Herbert C. Hoover has issued the following statement:

The weapons in this war are fighting men, munitions, food, ships and finance. If we are to defend liberty in this year 1917, all these must be upon such a scale as will demand the energies of our people. In previous wars a small proportion of the community went to fight, another small portion was devoted to their support, but the great bulk of the nation did "business as usual."

Autocracy has been for years organizing its resources to the end that they have placed one out of seven of its population on the fighting line and have so mobilized the civil population as to afford them complete support. They have suppressed production of every luxury and reduced even every necessity. Their arrogant confidence that they will become "masters of the world" is based upon their belief that the materialism, the selfishness, and the jealousy of individual interests in democracy make it impossible for it to organize such a strength. They do not deny the bravery of the men of democracy in battle, but they comfort themselves in the belief that we have not the self-sacrifice at home for their support.

Our problem is not alone to mobilize our civilian population for the support of our fighting men, but we also have the responsibility of the support of the fighting men of our allies. And food is not the least of their necessities. One of the great European statesmen has said: "The war will not be won by the last 500,000 fighting men, but will be won by the last 500,000 bushels of wheat." It is within our ability to give this last 500,000 bushels, but only if we organize to produce, organize to save, and organize to supply all.

We must feed our allies that their people may remain constant in the war. Liberty cannot be maintained upon the empty stomachs of the women and children. Through the drain of war our allies have steadily decreased in food production and other agencies also curtailed their supplies. Out of our abundance, by eliminating waste and extravagance, it is in our power, and in our power alone, to hold the wolf from the door of the world. Our obligation is greater than war itself—humanity demands it of us.

We must save in all food. We must eat plenty, but wisely and without waste. If we save in our consumption and our waste we can increase our surplus to export; if we substitute other commodities for those we can export, we can further increase our surplus.

Furthermore, by our economies we can save a major portion of the cost of the war. We can increase our ability to subscribe to liberty loans. If we can save food we can lower the price of living to our own people and relieve the strain and distress under which they labor to-day. We can only do this by organization so that there shall be no profiting from our economy, that all bear the burden equally.

The food administration is a volunteer organization to be endowed with powers by the government. This volunteer organization is not to be limited to a few executives in Washington. We are solicitous, nay anxious, to secure as actual members of this volunteer effort every man and every woman, every boy and girl in these United States who will undertake the task with us. There is no dictatorship in volunteer effort. It is by voluntary mobilization that we can answer autocracy with democracy. It is as great in efficiency and greater in spirit.

SIXTEEN TENTED CITIES WILL BE BUILT FOR THE GUARDSMEN.

The War Department authorizes the following:

Construction has begun on sixteen wooden cities for our new National Army, but this is only half of the military cities which will soon be ready for our soldiers. Steps are now being taken to build sixteen cities of tents to receive the National Guardsmen who will be called to the colors soon. It will not take so long to make them ready for the troops, and for this reason the work on them has been held back until the wooden cities were planned and put under contract. In fact, the location of two of them has not yet been fixed, but it is expected that a decision will be reached in a few days. The sites already determined are: Fort Worth, Tex.; Fort Sill, Okla.; Deming, N. M.; Waco, Tex.; Houston, Tex.; Linda Vista, Cal.; Greenville, S. C.; Augusta, Ga.; Macon, Ga.; Montgomery, Ala.; Anniston, Ala.; Fayetteville, N. C.; Palo Alto, Cal.; and Spartanburg, S. C.

The sanitation of these camps has received very careful study. Special care is being paid to securing an ample supply of good water, to providing sewerage and sewage disposal systems of the best type, and to the collection and disposal of the garbage. A number of the leading sanitary specialists of the country have been co-operating in the general plans for such work.

The men who go to these camps, and their families who stay at home, should know that everything that engineering science can suggest as desirable is being done to make these military cities as healthful as any of our permanent municipalities.

OUT FOR EVERYTHING

OR

THE BOY WHO TOOK CHANCES

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XVI.

NED PLAYS A GAME OF BLUFF.

She looked once in a while at Palgrave, yet without allowing any very great interest in her look to betray her.

"Do you claim to be a Pinkerton detective?" glared the head constable, turning upon Palgrave.

"I do not," replied he, in a low, grave tone.

"Don't claim to be a detective, eh?" sneered the constable.

"I am not allowed to say anything about myself," Palgrave replied, coolly.

"Who doesn't allow you?"

"My employers."

"The Pinkertons?"

"I didn't say so."

"But you wish us to understand so?"

"I do not."

"See here," warned the officer, snappishly, "you've got to tell us more about yourself."

"Pardon me, officer, but I don't have to do anything of the sort."

"Then you'll have to be locked up and at once."

"Very good, if you think it wise to lock me up," Palgrave retorted calmly.

Yet there was a note of menace in his tone that did not escape the head constable's ear.

"What does it all mean?" whispered Grace, who had moved close to our hero, who stood at some distance now from the group of other actors.

"Don't faint—don't turn color!" Ned whispered, warningly.

"Then he is really Uncle Edward?" demanded the girl, in as steady a whisper as she could command.

"That's just who he is. Grace, can I depend on your nerve to aid me in helping your uncle?"

"Try me!" challenged the girl.

Her eyes were blazing at him in a way that made Ned admire her even more than he ever had before.

"There's a door back of that drapery over there?" our hero whispered.

"Yes, yes."

"Go out in the hallway—get on the other side of it. Open the door softly. When you hear me say 'Now then, gentlemen,' just reach in and touch your uncle—understand?"

"Yes, yes!"

"You'll do it?"

Grace flashed a look of scorn that almost made Warren wince.

He hastily added one or two other directions.

Grace slid for the door unnoticed by the constables, all of whom had their eyes on the prisoner.

"For the last time," warned the head constable, "will you tell us whether you're a real Pinkerton man or not?"

"I won't!" Grace's uncle declared, flatly.

"Oh, well, if we search you we'll find your badge or something if you're a real Pinkerton man."

Palgrave laughed scornfully.

"Officer, do you suppose a Pinkerton man will ever carry anything that can identify him?"

"We've got to take you along, then," announced the head constable, firmly. "For that matter, we can lock you up and telegraph the Pinkertons."

"All right," nodded the escaped convict, coolly. "You can lock me up, and after it's over my employers can attend to making you pay big damages for false arrest. If you want to take me along, we won't waste more time in arguing."

But that word "damages" made a nasty impression on the constables.

An officer is liable for making a false arrest, and these constables were men of some small property in the village.

They did not relish making the wrong kind of an arrest and then being made to pay damages.

But suddenly one of the constables broke into a grin.

"See here, boys," he broke in, "we can take this chap along and no risk of trouble. We don't arrest him. We only use the police privilege of holding him as a suspicious person until we lock him up. That's legal and safe."

Palgrave was no longer held by the constables.

He had been backed up close to the wall, and now the four men stood between him and the hallway through which they had entered.

Near where Palgrave stood so calmly was a large drapery that appeared merely to hang down over the wall.

As a matter of fact, as Ned had divined, this drapery concealed a door.

"Yes, that's right," he heard the head constable say. "We won't arrest this man. We'll just hold him on suspicion and telegraph the Pinkertons."

It was time to give the signal, for Ned had seen a slight fluttering in the drapery.

"Now then, gentlemen," cried Ned, stepping forward. He did not dare to look at either Palgrave or the drapery lest his eyes betray him.

But he had butted in so briskly that the constables all gave him their undivided attention for the moment.

"This is a serious business, of course you know," Ned went on, sharply.

"Oh, not really serious," retorted the head constable. "You see, we are going to hold this man only as a suspicious person. The Pinkertons can set us right."

"And in the meantime you will be holding the thief-atcher and letting the thieves get away?"

"But if he'd only show us a badge or something like that——"

"He can't; he has told you that," Ned argued.

"But he seems to have told you all you wanted to know," returned the officer, almost suspiciously.

"He had to, when he first came here to track Slippery Dan's gang, because he needed my help," Ned returned.

For nearly two full minutes Ned Warren succeeded in keeping the attention of the constables chained upon him.

"Now, if this man would only tell us——" began the head constable.

As he spoke he turned to eye Palgrave.

But that prisoner was no longer there.

With a yell of rage the head constable leaped straight to the drapery, pulled it aside, tried the door and found it locked.

"Tricked!" roared the officer to his comrades. "Some one tell me quick, how do we reach the other side of this door? It looks too solid to force."

"Come with me," called Grace, readily, from the main hallway. "I will pilot you around there."

"Mighty quick, girl!" roared the head constable.

Grace led them through a side hallway to the locked door.

From there the trail led, to all appearances, to an open door that communicated with the yard.

"Hustle and scatter, boys!" bellowed the head constable. "We mustn't let that fellow get away now!"

"Oh, you noble fellow!" whispered Mrs. Fulham.

She could not say more, for out in the hallway now was a group of curious servants.

But she did not need to say more to make Ned wonderfully happy.

Then back came Grace. She eyed the servants, saying sharply:

"Go back to your quarters, please!"

As Grace came into the room, closing the door after her, Ned eyed her but did not move.

Instead, Grace came quickly up to him.

"Uncle Edward is safe, I think," she whispered, with a slight nod.

"Did he leave the house?" Ned whispered back.

"No; but I don't believe he can be found."

"Then you hid him?"

"Yes; but first of all I kissed my poor old uncle."

"Lucky uncle!" Ned flashed back at her.

"What do you mean?"

"You kissed him!"

"And I'd kiss you, you splendid fellow, if you'd let me," Grace flashed back, her eyes full of daring.

"Try me if you dare!"

Grace did not even look at her mother for permission, but, placing her hands on Ned's shoulders, kissed him impulsively, not once, but twice.

"I'd go through a fire for that any time," Ned whispered, gallantly.

Then remembering Mrs. Fulham he turned to her.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Fulham!"

"You needn't apologize for my daughter's conduct," the woman smiled back at him, though her face was pallid from the strain she was suffering through her brother.

"You needn't blame me, either, mamma," pouted Grace.

"I don't, my dear."

Ned's eyes danced with mischief, daring, longing as he gazed meaningly at the girl.

"I—I won't kiss you again," she whispered saucily. "But you—you may return what you received."

Mrs. Fulham smiled and turned away this time, as Ned claimed his forfeit.

"Don't ever let any one find out that you opened the door behind the drapery," Ned whispered.

"Why?"

"Because it's a State's prison offense, I believe, to help a fugitive escape from justice."

"Then you, too, have taken a risk of going to State's prison for your noble work to-night?" quivered Grace, her face paling and her eyes filling with horror.

"Oh, me?" whispered Ned. "Who cares?"

"I—I do, for one."

"I'd face more than prison for you, Grace."

Then on the impulse of the moment she forgot her word and kissed him again, while her mother stood leaning against the mantel and looked away.

CHAPTER XVII.

"I'LL BE HUNG FOR AN OLD SHEEP, THEN!"

Tap! tap! sounded on the door.

"Come in," called Grace, crossing to open the door.

But two constables entered before she could reach it.

"I am sorry to say, madam," began one of the men, "that we shall have to search the house."

"Do so, certainly, if you wish," replied Mrs. Fulham.

She moved a few feet away and rang a bell.

The butler, who had been suspiciously near, promptly answered.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

MARKERS FOR STATE CROSSINGS.

Artistic markers at each State line crossed by the Lincoln Highway between New York and San Francisco are to be erected. Arrangements have been completed by the Lincoln Highway Association. The markers will be each 34x22 inches in size, mounted on posts standing seven and one-half feet above the ground. The foundation will be of concrete. These markers are now being manufactured and are to be shipped to the various State highway councils for erection.

HOT MEALS IN THE AIR.

After spending several hours on patrol duty with the end not yet in sight, the airman of to-day would often give much to partake of hot food served to him while "on the wing." And since the only practical way by which the passengers of an aeroplane can have a hot drink or hot food is through the use of a vacuum bottle or jar, the idea has been suggested that the manufacturers of air craft would do well to build into their machines a number of pockets or wall cases for vacuum bottles, so that the latter, filled with preheated food, could be carried in safety. The suggestion is a good one.

OPENING LETTERS ELECTRICALLY.

A machine which opens envelopes in a continuous stream is the last word in electrical appliances for the office. Driven by a 1-20th horsepower electric motor, the envelope opener has opened 73,000 letters a working day of eight hours. The envelopes to be opened are placed on a feed table in batches of about fifty, and they are fed through one at a time by means of two rubber rollers which pass them along past two cutting edges. The depth of the cut may be varied at will, and there is absolutely no danger of cutting the contents of the envelope, so fine is the cut. A guard eliminates all possibility of the fingers coming in contact with the knives.

PREACHES FROM ROCK.

The Rev. William Chesser preached his twenty-second annual sermon "On the Rock" at a point where the old Flat Creek Church once stood at White Oak, Ind.

The land was deeded to the General Baptist Church by William Hays with the understanding that when it ceased to be used for church purposes the land on which the church stood was to revert to the heirs.

Twenty-two years ago the church was destroyed by fire, but once each year the Rev. Mr. Chesser, who was minister at the time the church was destroyed, returned and delivered a sermon from one of the cornerstones of the church, saving the land

to the congregation. The Rev. Mr. Chesser is now past seventy-five years old. The congregation hopes to rebuild the church.

FIVE TONS OF CHOCOLATE FOR U. S. MEN IN FRANCE.

Five tons of milk chocolate for Uncle Sam's soldiers in France was delivered on a pier in Brooklyn recently on a rush order of the National War Work Council of the Young Men's Christian Association. On the same pier the Y. M. C. A. has five tons of sugar, 200,000 letterheads with 100,000 envelopes; 600 dozen boxes of crackers, 20 barrels of flour, 20,000 packages of chewing gum, 500 folding chairs, 10 folding organs and 35 cases of athletic equipment.

Buildings have been hurriedly constructed at the army and navy training camps in this country; other "Red Triangle Buildings" will be put up at the ports of debarkation and at the American concentration camps in France. The Y. M. C. A. has purchased for this work 100 movie machines, 100 talking machines, 5,000 records, 7,000 sets of checkers, 50,000 Bibles, 10,000 hymn books and 150 cash registers.

THE FRIENDLY STORK.

The stork, as everybody has read, is one of the oldest bird friends of man. It has always been a favorite of the farmer because of the merciless war it makes upon his enemies in the field. It has, for centuries, been protected by law, and there is no more picturesque figure in Holland and along the Rhine than the stork, perched upon his nest, in some lofty place, or surveying, as he balanced on one leg, his surroundings from a chimney or other point of vantage, in the heart of a city.

In Holland he is a sacred bird, because he protects the dikes by destroying the worms and insects which undermine and weaken their wooden braces. In Germany the stork is regarded as bringing good luck to any house which it selects for its home and breeding place, and there is no legend more popular than that of the stork and the babies. Perhaps no bird occupies so conspicuous a place in children's picture books.

The popular stork of Europe is the white stork, whose plumage is pure white, with deep black trimmings and bright red legs and bill. It averages more than three feet in height when full grown, and in flight, high in the air, with its long legs stretched out straight behind, it makes a most picturesque object.

In the "courting season" the male stork is very amusing to watch, circling around the observant female with an awkward dancing step, extending and gesturing with its wings, and emitting a clattering noise from its mandibles, for it has no voice.

BEN AND THE BANKER'S SON

—OR—

THE TROUBLES OF A RICH BOY'S DOUBLE

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVIII (continued).

"All right."

"This way to the bathroom. Take your time. I'll be outside the door when you are through."

Ben made his toilette, ate breakfast and then went downstairs with Jack Fox.

Bill was smoking in the parlor, and he said good morning pleasantly enough.

"Now look here, Leslie," he continued, "we are going to take you for a ride. It's no use to ask questions, and it's no use to try to pull away from us, for if you do, as true as we are here now we shall run you to Sing Sing. Just be good. Say nothing, do as you are told and you are going to come away out ahead in this game."

Ben acquiesced.

There was clearly nothing else for him to do, for the present at least.

A closed carriage was at the door and all three entering, they were driven to a noted ready-made clothing establishment on Broadway.

"You will go in here and fit yourself out like a gentleman," said Bill. "Do not be bashful. We want you to have the best, and we will pay the bill."

The transformation was soon made, and they returned to the carriage.

Then it was uptown and east again.

Soon Ben found himself at the 92d street ferry.

"Say, are you taking me to Dr. O'Grady's?" he demanded.

"That's what we are, and you can't help it," replied Bill.

"But why?"

"For your health!"

"Surely you don't mean to put me in that man's clutches again?"

"Oh, no! Don't you fret. Just tie to us and you will soon be all right. I suppose you would like to get back where you were again, wouldn't you?"

"Do you mean to take me back to Rio Vista?"

"Quit your questions," broke in Fox. "We know our biz. All you've got to do is to obey orders—see?"

Ben was getting terribly worried again.

Still there was nothing for it but to keep cool and do as he was told.

They drove directly to Dr. O'Grady's and were

promptly admitted when the detectives showed their shields.

Peter met them in the hall.

He looked much alarmed when he saw Ben, who did not take the trouble to recognize him.

"Take my card to Dr. O'Grady and tell him I want to see him at once," said Bill, sternly.

He pushed open the door of the doctor's handsomely-furnished reception room, and all three seated themselves.

"Now look here, Leslie, don't you open your mouth unless you are told to," said Bill.

"I'm in your hands. I'm not saying anything," replied Ben.

"Anyhow, I'm going to get square with Dr. O'Grady," he thought.

It was some moments before the doctor put in an appearance.

He was cool and collected.

Paying no attention whatever to Ben, he asked which was Mr. Firman.

"I'm Firman," replied Bill. "I represent the ——— Detective Agency."

"So I see by your card. What may your business with me be?"

"Doctor, it's pretty serious business. Hadn't you better sit down?"

"Thank you. I prefer to stand. State your business quick. I have no time to waste."

"Do you know this young man?"

"I do not. I never saw him before."

Bill looked at him with a sneering smile.

"That won't work, Doc," he said.

"I should say not," put in Jack Fox. "Come off your perch, now!"

"What do you mean?" demanded the doctor, growing vividly nervous.

"We mean business," said Bill. "It won't pay you to hold back. You know this young man?"

"I do not."

"I say you do. Listen! The real Ben Leslie is now back at Rio Vista. This is the fake. He is in our hands and is ready to go before the Grand Jury now in session and swear to the fraud you committed. That beautiful fake birthmark, the palming him off on old man Leslie and all the rest of it."

The doctor turned livid.

"Is this a strike?" he asked.

"It's a strike," said Bill.

"Suppose I refuse to treat with you?"

"That spells arrest."

"What is your price?"

"Five thousand."

Bill pulled out a cigar and bit off the end.

"Come, Doc! The cards are stacked against you!" he cried. "Try as you will, you can't trump my trick."

"You ask me for more money than I possess," replied the wretched O'Grady. "It is impossible to meet any such demand."

"Then you will have to come along with us."

"Then I shall have to. I have no such amount."

"How much will you stand?" broke in Jack Fox.

"A thousand dollars is the utmost. That will almost bankrupt me. I have never made money here."

"Thousand nothing!" cried Bill. "Make it four, Doc, and it's a go."

"No, no! I cannot! Gentlemen, I am telling the truth."

"Come, come!" cried Fox. "Hist the ante or trot along with us!"

"Two thousand."

"Make it three."

"Well, then, three it is, but it will ruin me," groaned the doctor.

He shot at Ben a look of rage and hate.

"I'll fix you for this!" he cried, shaking his finger at the boy.

"Enough of that!" said Bill. "Shut up! Cough up! We want to be getting out of this!"

CHAPTER XIX.

IN ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE.

Doctor O'Grady led the way to his office and produced his checkbook.

"We want that three thousand in cash," said Fox.

"I can't do that," he said. "I have no such amount in the house."

"Then you must manage to get it pretty blame sudden, or it spells arrest," Jack Fox growled.

"I shall have to overdraw my bank account."

"What about the check being good, then?"

"I shall make it good."

"Like fun you will. No, no, Doc. This won't do. Hitch up and let's all go to the bank together. Where's it located now?"

The bank proved to be at Hunter's Point, close by the Long Island Railroad depot.

The wretched O'Grady, glaring at Ben, had no alternative but to yield.

His carriage was called and all crowded into it.

Upon reaching the bank, Bill Firman and the doctor went in together, leaving Jack Fox to guard Ben.

Presumably the money was paid over.

Bill said as much when he returned to the carriage, and Jack and Ben immediately alighted.

"We'll go to New York over the James Slip ferry," said Bill. "By-by, Doc. Much obliged."

O'Grady glared worse than ever now.

"There'll come a day of reckoning soon," he growled. "I'll break you fellows if it takes a year, and as for that young cug with you, let him look out for his skin. I'll land him in Sing Sing yet."

"Ho, ho, not so!" cooed Fox. "Tra-la-la! Doc, we are gone!"

They walked down the street with Ben between them and turned into the saloon by the ferry gate.

"Say, that was great!" cried Fox. "I'll set 'em up on that. Boy, what will you have?"

Ben drank some soda-water with the blackmailers. It seemed entirely the best way to pretend to stand in with them.

"You got the whole figure?" demanded Bill.

"Sure I did," replied Fox.

"Well, then we had better whack up now. The boy gets his rake-off, too."

Fox was inclined to make objections and postpone the division of the spoils, but Bill would hear to nothing of the sort.

Ben listened to the argument in silence.

"I'll take what they give me," he thought. "I must have money if I am going to be able to do anything."

Pat and the Kid had "gone through" him, it will be remembered, and Ben was penniless now.

After the shameful way Doctor O'Grady had used him, he felt but few scruples about taking the cash.

But it was a very meager share which came his way.

Fox finally handed over \$1,500 to Bill Firman, and after some further discussion they bestowed upon Ben fifty dollars each.

Ben pocketed it without a word, as objections look suspicious.

By this time the James Slip boat was in, and all went aboard, crossing to New York.

"Now look here, Ben," said Bill Firman, as soon as they had seated themselves in the smoking cabin, "we have done pretty blame well in this deal, and so have you for a boy. Want to join us in another?"

"I suppose I shall have to," replied Ben, who could see nothing else but to appear to stand in with these men.

"Well, that's what you will!"

"What's the scheme?"

"The scheme is to scare the life out of that double of yours and make him tell what he did with the Spellman cash."

"How do you propose to work it?"

"By bringing him face to face with you. He's in clover just now, and we will show him the road to Sing Sing, with the chance of putting you back in his place, unless he coughs up and turns that cash over to us."

(To be continued.)

NEWS OF THE DAY

GUINEA PIGS AS FOOD.

The cavy (guinea pig) is typically a pet animal, and has no other excuse for existence than the pleasure he gives those who appreciate his good qualities. But it is to the undeniable dibility of the cavy that we owe the existence of the cheerful little squeaker of to-day.

The Incas of Peru long ago domesticated the wild ancestor of the modern animals—a small, tailless, unicolored member of the genus Cavix, the exact identity of which is a matter of some doubt. These creatures were allowed to run freely about the home of their owners, whose object in breeding them undoubtedly was for their food value.

The time which must undoubtedly have elapsed since this domestication was first begun is evident from the entirely changed color of the present-day cavy.

JAPANESE POCKET STOVES.

The kwairo is placed in the clothing and the fuel put up in sausage form, the whole looking something like a metal cigar-case. The pocket brazier is used by railroad travellers and delicate school children. Aged people sleep with the kwairo at their feet. Cramps or colic are soothed by placing the little strange instrument across the pit of the stomach.

In the Russo-Japanese War many a benumbed Japanese soldier saved himself by placing a kwairo in his bosom. Immense quantities have been ordered by Russia during the present war. French missionaries introduced the pocket-stove into France.

The fuel now used was invented in 1882 by Sokichi Yamazaki, of the province of Shimotsuke. The annual output by the trust company which bought the inventor's patent exceeds 160,000 yen.

The packing and transportation of the fuel, which is sold at a very popular price, requires very careful attention. It is put up in specially prepared paper bags.

DOG CARRIES TRUCE NOTE.

In a section of the line where there has been severe fighting this week the British and German front trenches are only thirty yards apart. A Scotch soldier, left badly wounded in this narrow stretch of No Man's Land, moaned so piteously that the British front line officer could scarcely restrain his men from certain death in attempting to bring him in. While the officer was trying to think of some plan for rescuing the wounded man his eye fell on a stray dog which had been fraternizing for several days with soldiers in both German and English lines, finding friends in each.

He quickly wrote a note, "Will you allow us to bring our man in?" and tied it around the dog's neck, sending him across to the German lines with

the message. In a few minutes the dog returned with the reply. "Will give you five minutes." The officer and two men took a stretcher and went over the top, returning in saafety four minutes later. Men on both sides joined in a cheer before they settled down again to the business of war.

TO PRESERVE TEXAS RELIC.

The only building of its kind, the old Governor's Palace, at San Antonio, Tex., on the west side of Military Plaza, over which have flown six flags, is about to be lost unless San Antonians and the people of Texas bestir themselves to save this priceless relic, about which is woven so much of the history of early days. The Verimendi Palace, the Navarro place, the Garza Plaza—all have fallen before the onslaught of modern commercialism.

In the old building now threatened with destruction have been enacted many wonderful and tragic events—disgraceful ones, too. Beneath its roof have lived many notables and its hospitalities were lavishly dispensed. Tradition tells of treasures and courtships and its story is a fascinating one.

It was the seat of the royal government of Spain in Texas, and over the doors there remains to-day the coat of arms, which has survived the vicissitudes of time and weather.

The building will have to be preserved largely through patriotic subscriptions.

WHY DO BARBER POLES HAVE STRIPES?

In early years the barber not only cut hair and shaved people, but he was also a surgeon. He was a surgeon to the extent that he bled people. In early times our knowledge of surgery was practically limtied to blood-letting. A great many ailments were attributed to too much blood in the body, and when anything got wrong with a man or woman, the first thing they thought of was to reduce the amount of blood in the body by taking some of it out, says the Book of Wonders.

The town barber was the man who did this for people and his pole represented the sign of his business.

The round ball at the top, which was generally gilded, represents the barbering end of the business. It stood for the brass basin in which the barber used to prepare lather for shaving customers.

The pole itself represents the staff which people who were having blood taken out of their bodies held during the operation. The two spiral ribbons, one red and one white, which are painted spirally on the pole, represented the bandages. The white one stood for the bandage which was put on before the blood was taken out and the red one the bandage which was used for binding up the wound when the operation was completed.

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Good Current News Articles

One of the most original suggestions from women motorists is that the use of red as a color in the veil or coat will prevent any burning or tanning. Women have been known to wear thin chiffon veils of red through the desert and find no more change in their skin than would have come had they remained at home. It might be worth trying, anyway.

One thousand Boy Scouts began work the other day along the eastern shore of Virginia digging 4,000,000 bushels of potatoes that probably would have decayed in the ground because 15,000 negroes have migrated to the North. The boys are from Washington, Richmond, Petersburg, Norfolk, Baltimore and as far north as Wilmington, Del. Two companies of the Fourth Virginia Regiment were put at work helping to load steamships at Norfolk with vegetables. Wharves are congested with produce for Northern markets and the loss already has been considerable. A general call is being sent out to citizens to aid. The negro labor shortage is the cause.

Fifty years ago Walter Bushnell planted a walnut in the soil of his farm near Carrollton, Ill. The nut sprouted and a tree began to grow therefrom. Bushnell planted the tree with one object in view, and that was that the tree should furnish the lumber for his coffin. The tree waxed strong and became a monarch of its race. Three years ago Bushnell had the tree cut down and sawed into slabs. The lumber was placed in a dry shed and allowed to season for three years. Bushnell is now eighty years of age, and several days ago had Charles Fisher of Hardin, Calhoun County, come to his home and make the lumber into a coffin, which will be used at the time of Bushnell's death.

At the annual meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) held in New York city on May 29, it was decided to organize a unit of 500 Quakers

to go abroad and assist their French and English brethren in restoring devastated homes behind the fighting line in France. As the German lines retire, the Quakers intend to reclaim the ruined territory, bit by bit; build great numbers of portable houses, and provide food, shelter, and clothing to the returning refugees. The committee appointed to organize the American Quaker unit consists of Prof. Rufus M. Jones, of Haverford College, Dr. Leroy Mercer of Swarthmore College, and Vincent D. Nicholson of New York city. The men and women who volunteer for this unit will begin training at once at Haverford, where they will be taught how to build houses, restore streets, and make devastated villages fit for habitation. As soon as the unit is ready for its work it will be sent to France under the auspices of the American Red Cross.

Grins and Chuckles

"So Mutlin, the trust magnate, has retired from business, has he? How much do you suppose he cleaned up? "Everything in sight but his record?"

"And you say you are looking for work?" asked the kind lady. "Yes, mum," replied Frazzled Frankly, "but I can't find it." "Poor man. Why did you leave your last place?" "I wuz pardoned, mum."

"Johnson has developed into a confirmed kicker, but his wife can handle him every time. He kicked last night because his dinner was cold." "What was his wife's reply?" "She made it hot for him."

"I thought it was to be merely a boxing match, but it looked to me like a real fight, and a pretty stiff one at that." "Real? You bet it was real! One of the fighters was a stage Irishman and the other was a genuine Irishman."

The woman was unfolding to the mayor a scheme for appointment of members of her sex to the police force. "Rats!" he said, his patience sorely tried. "Where? Where?" shrieked the woman, furling her skirts and leaping from a chair.

"But," said the real estate man, "you shouldn't let this bargain get away from you. Why don't you argue the thing out with your wife?" "No use," replied Meekly; "my wife has stubborn notions against it. The moment I opened my mouth she'd put her foot down and——" "The idea! I should think you'd choke to death."

"Here," said the salesman, exhibiting another one, "is something new. We call this the 'lovers' clock.' You can set it so it will take it two hours to run one hour." "I'll take that," said Miss Janner, with a bright blush. "And now, if you have one that can be set so as to run two hours in one hour's time or less, I think I'd like one of that kind, too."

THE FRONTIERSMAN'S ESCAPE.

By Kit Clyde

Many years ago, when Iowa was the western border of ordinary American travel, Morton Massey built a cabin near to the spot where the town of Muscatine now stands, and maintained himself, wife and child, by tilling the ground in summer and trapping in winter.

One morning Massey was awakened in a very rude manner; the butt ends of half a dozen riding whips battered against his strong door, and hoarse voices on the outside demanded admission.

Looking out through a small window, the frontiersman saw half a dozen men sitting on their steaming horses.

Not knowing them, and not knowing the object of their visit, he hastily slipped on all his clothing, and grasped his rifle before unbarring the door.

Massey was a very good man, but he had a stern, almost harsh countenance.

The moment he appeared, one of the mounted men cried:

"I'll bet he's the chap. He looks just like a thief."

The backwoodsman turned fiercely on the speaker; his blood was up in less than a minute, and he cocked his rifle with an angry snap.

"Hold on!" authoritatively said one man, who appeared to be the leader. "You can quarrel and fight when we get this business finished. See here, mister, where is your stable?"

"That shanty yonder," snapped Massey, who wondered what it all meant.

"Then unlock it, or we'll make no bones about smashing it in."

"It is always unlocked," said the brave frontiersman. "But who are you that insult a peaceable man?"

"We're the Cedarville Regulators," replied the leader. "There was a fine horse stolen in town, and we've tracked the animal and thief here, and here the trail has come to an end."

While he had been speaking, one of them had dashed to the stable, and in an instant back came the words.

"The horse is here."

That was enough. Men of that sort did not stand to ask questions or argue points.

"Take him, my lads!" cried the leader, and backed by his men he threw himself upon Massey.

The latter understood his situation in an instant. He knew that through some plan, or else through some chance the stolen horse had been placed in his stable, and on the evidence furnished by this circumstance, these rough and ready regulators would not hesitate to hang him.

Therefore, having no desire to die the death of a horse-thief, he fought for liberty like a tiger.

But what could one man, however brave, do against numbers?

In a moment he was hurled to the ground.

Strong cords were passed around his hands and feet, and he lay bound and helpless upon the threshold of his own door.

And while the weeping wife was crying out for mercy to them, they put Massey on the stolen horse and dashed away to Cedarville.

Bound down to the horse's back Massey passed over mile after mile, until from his rigid position and his swift passage through the cold air, he became considerably chilled.

"Men," he said, for his tongue was free, "you are torturing an innocent man."

"Bah!" was the jeering cry.

"And even if I am guilty——"

He was going to make an appeal for mercy, when at that very instant there rang out a loud chorus of yells.

Like a whirlwind in the desert a band of Indians swept down upon them.

The horse to which Massey was bound had been traveling soberly along with the rest, not led, nor urged, but when the charge was made and the bullets began to fly, he kicked up his heels, snorted, and rushed away at full speed, not caring for such hot quarters.

Like Mazeppa, bound to the wild horse of Tartary, Massey was borne away at a rapid rate, he knew not whither.

For over a mile the frightened animal ran on; then he reached a piece of heavy timber land, and the frontiersman expected that he would moderate his speed, but still he rushed on with frightened bounds.

At length, however, the animal struck heavily against a tree; there was a severe shock, a ripping, tearing sound, and then the hunter flew from the back of the steed to the greensward.

The force with which he struck upon the hard earth deprived Massey of all sensibility.

His leg had come in contact with a very sharp-edged piece of bark, and the result was a gash from which the blood oozed forth in a tiny stream.

For perhaps an hour he lay there, as in a mazy dream, but half recovered from his stupor. Then a heavy paw touched him on the leg.

It brought him back to consciousness with a jump; a large gray wolf was over him.

Massey gave such a scream of genuine terror that the animal bounded away in a perfect fright.

To his surprise, the hunter found that the shock had broken the cords that bound him. He bounded to his feet; the cold air revived him.

He saw the great wolf slinking away like a cowardly cur through the trees, and he felt a thrill of terror as he heard a long chorus of yelps coming from all sides. He looked down at the injured leg, saw the trickling blood, and knew that the keen-scented animals had smelt his life current.

He glanced around him, mapped out his course in his mind, and then away he started for home.

Within two minutes' time there were fully twenty hungry wolves on his track.

Emboldened by numbers, the otherwise cowardly animals began to close in upon him.

Massey felt for his weapons. He had but a knife.

Putting on his best speed, the settler ran on, casting many a backward glance at his four-footed foes.

Nearer and nearer came the yelling pack of wolves.

"Oh, if I had a gun I'd scare the wits out of them," muttered Massey. "Powder would scatter them. Never mind, I'll stretch some of them out before I get down."

An instant later the foremost one of the pack were upon him. He turned with the knife in his hand, made a quick slash, and stretched the first wolf out, wounded.

In an instant the other wolves had torn their comrade to shreds, while the frontiersman ran fleetly on.

Brief respite. In less than two minutes the hungry demons were on his track.

Whir! through the air sprang the largest animal in the pack, and landed fairly on the hunter's back. His lolling tongue and hot breath touched Massey's cheek; the latter stabbed at him over his shoulder, striking him again and again, yet still he clung on, and his weight was tearing Massey down to the ground, when—

Crack! the keen report of a rifle rang out, and the wolf dropped down dead, while the rest of the pack, at the discharge of firearms, turned tail and ran.

And then Massey found that he was close to his cabin, and that it was his faithful wife who fired the timely shot.

The band of Regulators were wiped out by the Indians, and as nobody else troubled themselves about the horse case, Morton Massey was left unmolested to live to a ripe old age, and recount over and over the story of the frontiersman's escape.

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FLAG.

The Smithsonian Institution June 14 issued the following:

To-day probably several million American flags are waving serenely in the varied breezes of our spacious land, significant of the calm and dignified, yet deep and lasting patriotism of the American people. Be this our native land or adopted country, we pledge allegiance to that flag, uncover as we pass, and wear it in miniature as a token of our loyalty. And yet what do we know about its origin, its meaning, and its history? A lecture trip to the United States National Museum in Washington, the national depository of American relics, will teach much concerning the flag.

Naturally there were many forms of early flags, especially colonial types used by the individual colonies and militia regiments, before the flag of the United States was established by our Continental Congress on June 14, 1777, now celebrated as Flag

Day. This act required that the flag of the United States be of thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white, and that the union be thirteen white stars on a blue field, representing a new constellation, but it did not define how many points the stars should have, how they should be arranged, nor make provision for additional ones. One of the first occasions for public display of the "Stars and Stripes" is said to have been on August 6, 1777, when the new flag was hoisted over the troops at Fort Schuyler, Rome, N. Y. John Paul Jones is said to have been the first to fly the "Stars and Stripes" over the high seas, on the "Ranger," in November, 1777. The National Museum has an early naval 12-star type flag said to have been flown by John Paul Jones during the War of the Revolution.

From the time of the Revolution the stars and stripes in the flag have varied. There were 13 stars during the Revolution, 14 in the War of 1812, 29 in the Mexican War, 33 to 35 in the Civil War, 45 in the Spanish War, and 48 to-day. The stripes were changed first from 13 to 15, and then back again to 13. It may be surprising to know that our national flag is among the oldest flags of the nations, being older than the present British Jack, the French Tricolor, and the flag of Spain, and many years older than the flags of Germany and Italy, some of which are either personal flags or those of the reigning families. The American flag of the highest historic and sentimental value to the whole country is in the National Museum collections. It is the original "Star-Spangled Banner," which flew over Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor, during the bombardment on September 13-14, 1914, and was the inspiration of Francis Scott Key's immortal poem, now sung as our national anthem. It is of the 15 star and stripe type, adopted after the admission of Vermont and Kentucky by an act approved by President Washington, January 13, 1794. The "Star-Spangled Banner" measures about 30 feet square, though it was probably somewhat longer, and is much battered and torn, with one star missing, possibly shot away.

From 1795 this form continued as the standard flag until President Monroe's administration, when Congress enacted that it should thereafter be of thirteen stripes and twenty stars, with the addition of a star for each new State, commencing July 4, 1818.

DOG CATCHES DESERTER

James Thompson, special officer of Leavenworth, Kan., owns a police dog whose abilities as an apprehender of criminals frequently has been scoffed at by Thompson's friends. The dog has vindicated himself.

William Payne, a deserter last summer from the Missouri National Guard, while stationed on the Mexican border, had escaped from the disciplinary barracks at the army post here.

The dog captured the fleeing trusty, holding to the man's trousers leg and impeding his flight until officers subdued him.

FACTS WORTH READING

MOSQUITOES FOR BIRDS.

The delicate vocal organs of song birds respond magically to special care bestowed upon the diet. For this reason birds that are cultivated in captivity are fed specially prepared foods designed to furnish maximum nourishment with minimum labor of the digestive organs.

A food which has been found especially valuable to bird breeders has for its principal ingredients Japanese mosquitoes and ants' eggs, says Popular Science. The nationality of the mosquitoes is not supposed to make a difference in the taste or digestibility of the food. The reason the insects are imported from Japan is that the Japanese have a method of catching them in large quantities, which as yet Americans have not discovered.

A GUIDE TO MARCHING BY THE STARS.

The present war has called forth several books designed to aid soldiers in keeping their bearings in night marches by means of the stars. The latest manual of this kind is by an Englishwoman, Mrs. H. Periam Hawkins and is called "Guiding Stars." The book contains a revolving map, or small planisphere, which can be carried in the pocket. This map is provided with a double thread, the loop of which is hitched round the hole. The two threads are knotted at a point corresponding to the zenith for places north of latitude 50 degrees, and by certain simple adjustments of the ends of the strings and of the planisphere for date and hour the soldier is virtually enabled to lay out his course among the stars.

CHAIRS RUN BY MOTORS.

An American firm is now engaged in making electric motor chairs with either 150 ampere hour or 200 ampere hour batteries, says the Scientific American. The former, when fully charged, will give five hours of continuous running service, while the latter will give seven hours, according to the designer. The batteries are of the 12-volt type and the motor is designed to develop 0.5 to 2 horsepower, according to the load.

The motor is geared directly to the axle of the front wheel with a triple worm which permits the motor to propel the car up a 15 per cent. grade when loaded with two adults. Extending in front of the car is a guard which breaks the circuit between the batteries and motor and applies the brake when it comes in contact with any obstacle.

THE MOST POWERFUL SEARCHLIGHT.

It is ten feet high, its mirror has a diameter of five feet, and it weighs three tons. Its beam is as brilliant as the sun at eight o'clock in the morning

or four in the afternoon, New York latitude, and you can read a newspaper by its light thirty miles away. The heat of its focused beam is so intense that it will set paper afire at a distance of 250 feet. It has a candlepower of more than 1,250,000,000.

These are a few astonishing facts in Popular Science Monthly for June, about the Sperry searchlight, the invention of Elmer A. Sperry of Brooklyn, N.Y., who is already known as the inventor of the airplane stabilizer and ship gyroscope bearing his name and the first electric arc light.

One of the most powerful beacons along the coast is the Sandy Hook Lighthouse. But the Sperry searchlight is twenty-two times more brilliant than that light. Were the Sperry lamp substituted for the lighthouse beacon, a ship passing out to sea could be bathed in light until she disappeared below the horizon. By swinging the light back and forth across the sky it has been made visible 150 miles away. For navy use the Sperry lamp illuminates a target ten times more brilliantly than any other projector devised.

SEEING IN THE DARK.

Cats cannot see in the real dark any more than human beings. These animals can find their way in the dark and can see more than a human being because of one distinct difference in their eyes, which may for them be considered an advantage. The pupils of their eyes can, therefore, let more light into their eyes than people. The result is that when it is so dark that you cannot see a thing and you decide it is really dark, the cat can still see, because there is always a little more light left, and she can open the pupils of her eyes and make them larger, thus letting in more light, and the little bit of light there is still left gets into her eyes, and she is able to see, says the Book of Wonders. But in a really dark room a cat could see no more than you can. You see, our eyes open and shut more or less like those of a cat, according to the intensity of the light. When you go out of the dark and shaded room into the bright sunlight and look at the sun, you naturally squint your eyes without deliberately intending to do so. This is Nature's way of preventing too much light getting into your eyes at one time. Gradually the pupils of your eyes contract and get smaller, until you can see, without squinting, anything in the sunlight. If, then, you were to go right back into a dark or shaded room, you would have to wait a moment or two before you could see things distinctly in the room—until the pupils of your eyes had dilated (became larger), so as to let in enough light to enable you to see normally. The eye automatically enlarges and contracts the pupil of the eye, to enable us to see distinctly in either light or less light places.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

RATION OF THE SOLDIER.

The daily ration of the soldier in the United States Army, says the American Medical Journal, consists of bread, 18 ounces; butter $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce, or jam 1.28 ounces; potatoes, 20 ounces; bacon, 12 ounces; beans, 24 ounces; lard, 0.64 ounce; salt, 0.64 ounce; pepper, 0.04, and vinegar, 6.16 gill; coffee, 1.12 ounces; sugar, 3.2 ounces; evaporated milk, 5 ounces.

This ration contains 4,199 calories, and is greatest of any of the armies of the world except Russia, in which the ration is said to contain 4,929 calories. The calories in the French ration are given as 3,340, the British 3,292, and the German 3,147.

TWO AMERICAN MINERS SLAIN IN VENEZUELA BY INDIANS.

The Department of State is advised by the receipt of a telegram from the American consul at La Guaira, Venezuela, of the killing of two Americans in Venezuela in October, 1916. The names of the two men are variously written as John Alberly or John Aberly and W. D. O'Keefe or M. D. A. O'Keefe.

These men, who were miners, were killed by treacherous Indian guides while prospecting for gold on the Caroni River in eastern Venezuela. They were not registered in any consulate in Venezuela or at the American legation, and all efforts to identify them or to communicate with any relatives or friends have failed. A small sum of money is in the hands of the American consular agent at Ciudad Bolivar.

FUR-BEARING ANIMALS.

The fur trade in this country has grown to such proportions as regards its business value that naturally the concern of those engaged in it is directed to its permanency. Curiously enough, the prevalent opinion that fur-bearing animals are fast decreasing in numbers is not correct as regards those animals which furnish the bulk of the fur business.

There are a number of fur-bearing animals which cannot exist in civilized and thickly settled countries, and which consequently are fast dying out. But muskrats, coons, skunks and some others seem to thrive and multiply in spite of civilization, for such old and thickly settled States as New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio still contribute largely to the fur trade, especially in muskrat skins. Should the time come when these animals cannot be had plentifully in their wild state, it is not unlikely that they will be bred especially for their furs.

SOMETHING ABOUT SHEEP.

Sheep came into our Western States early in the seventies, at a time when these States were thinly settled, but following the sheep came the labor incident to its care, and thus the railroads, stores, cities

and schoolhouses found their way into the land. Originally all of our sheep industry was east of the Mississippi River. Then for a time it was east of the Missouri River. To-day west of the Missouri River we have about 23,000,000 aged sheep, or more than one-half of the total in the United States, says the Book of Wonders. In the pioneer days the Western sheep skirmished on the range for most of the food that it obtained. To-day conditions are different, and, while the sheep is on the range for a short time each year, it spends its summer in the National Forest, for which grazing a fee is paid to the Federal government. Its winters are spent largely around the haystack of the farmer and about fifty to sixty cents worth of hay is fed to each sheep in the West each winter.

TO CLEAR AIR OF GERMAN FLYERS.

The Council of National Defense authorizes the following:

Howard Coffin, chairman of the aircraft production board of the Council of National Defense, in commenting on a dispatch from Paris, indicating that Germany intended to bring 3,500 airplanes into the fighting line for the spring of 1918, asserted that this served only to emphasize the opportunity which the United States has to crush Germany in the air:

"No matter how efficient her organization," Mr. Coffin said, "this report, based probably on accurate information, shows that Germany's producing capacity after all is limited. Compared with the number of airplanes on which both groups of belligerents so far have been able to rely, a new force of 3,500 planes next spring might well prove discouraging to the allies. The French and British alone probably can not more than hold their own against Germany's output, although they might succeed in gaining an occasional partial supremacy over our enemy. "Pitted against America's added resources, properly organized, the situation immediately changes. No matter what desperate efforts she makes, it will be a physical impossibility for Germany to increase her present rate of output to any dangerous extent. If we can carry through our program to produce the thousands of machines planned, the permanent supremacy of the allies in the air is assured. What we need is the money to carry the program through.

"Our plan contemplates nothing less than driving the German fliers out of the air and maintaining a constant raiding patrol over the territory for 50 miles back of the fighting lines. If we build the quantities of machines for which we have the capacity and train our thousands of available men, we can tear up the enemy communication lines and prevent movements of troops and supplies."

**GOOD LUCK GUN FOB.**

The real western article carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather, with a highly nickeled buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MAGIC PUZZLE KEYS.

Two keys interlocked in such a manner it seems impossible to separate them, but when learned it is easily done. Price 6c., by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

SECOG SPARKLER.

Hold discs in each hand and twist the strings by swinging the toy around and around about 30 times. Then move the hands apart, pulling on the discs and causing the strings to untwist. This will rotate the wheel and cause the sparks to fly. The continued rotation of the wheel will again twist the strings. When this twisting commences slacken the strings slightly until they are full twisted, then pull.

Price 25 cts. each by mail, postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.

New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

DEVIL'S LOCK PUZZLE.

Without exception, this is the hardest one of all. And yet, if you have the directions you can very easily do it. It consists of a ring passed through two links on shafts. The shanks of this puzzle are always in the way. Get one and learn how to take the ring off. Price 15c., by mail, postpaid, with directions.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



The Bottle Imp.—The peculiarity of this little bottle is that it cannot be made to lie down, and yet by simply passing the hand over it, the performer causes it to do so.

This trick affords great amusement, and is of convenient size to carry about. Price 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.

Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price 10c. by mail, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

GREAT BURGLAR PUZZLE.

The latest and most fascinating puzzle ever placed on the market. Patented May 30. It consists of four revolving dials, each dial containing 16 figures. 64 figures in all. To open the safe these dials must be turned around until the figures in each of the 16 columns added together total 40. The puzzle is made on the plan of the combination lock on the large iron safes that open on a combination of figures. Persons have been known to sit up all night, so interested have they become trying to get each column to total 40. In this fascinating puzzle. With the printed key which we send with each puzzle the figures can be set in a few minutes so as to total 40 in each column.

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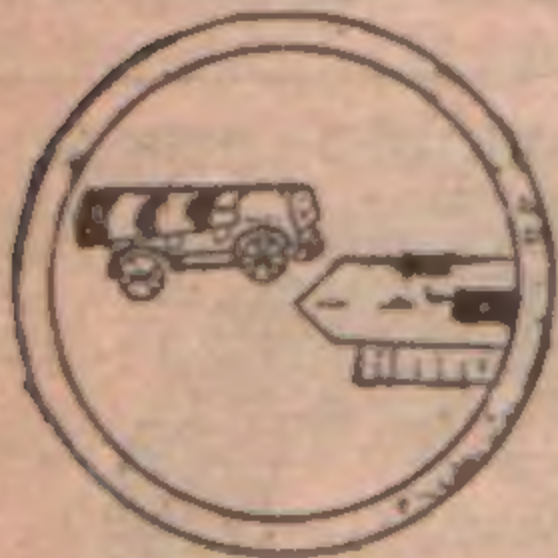
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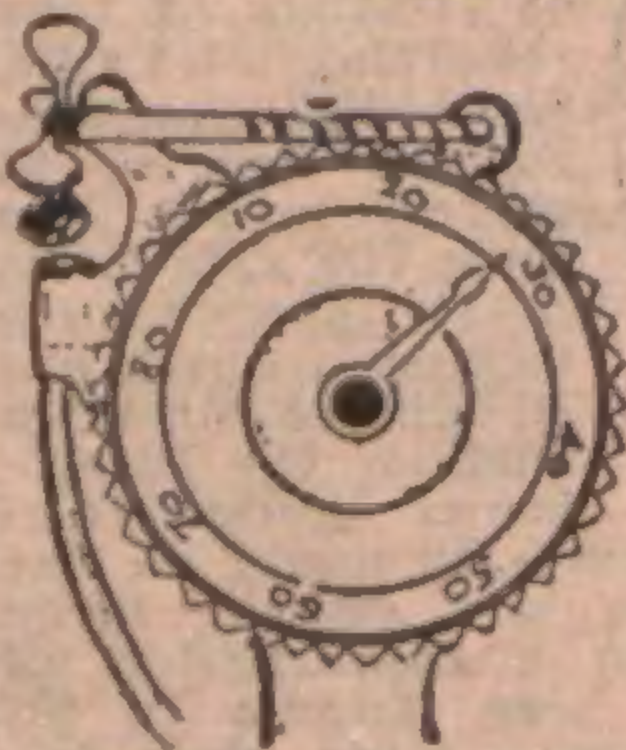
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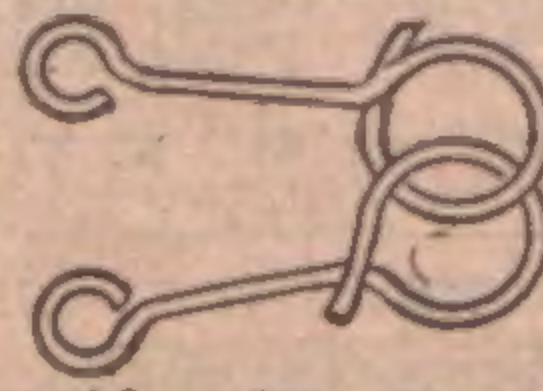
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